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The Meaning and Use of the Word *Vidua*
in Latin Literature of the 2nd and 1st century B.C.

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**The Meaning and Use of the Word *Vidua*
in Latin Literature of the 2nd and 1st century B.C.**

by

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Dedication

To my dearly loved parents Larisa Koutseridou and Olegk Koutseridis.

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Abstract

The Meaning and Use of the Word *Vidua* in Latin Literature of the 2nd and 1st century B.C.

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The primary role of this report is to provide an in-depth analysis of all the instances of the word *vidua*, its meanings and uses in Latin literature from the last two centuries B.C. This close examination of the word *vidua* in the literary sources of this period has resulted in a number of important modifications to its definition. The word *vidua*, which is commonly translated by ancient scholars as widow, is not sustained by the contextual evidence of the majority of the passages that do not state explicitly the reason for the women's deprived status. Instead the word is most commonly used to mean a much broader social group of Roman women, all no longer married women, a category which includes various groups of women such as widows, divorcees, abandoned women and women whose husbands have been away for long periods of time. Furthermore the English word unmarried should not be used to translate the Latin word *vidua* since, as I demonstrate throughout my paper, there is a clear distinction in the Roman minds between women who are no longer married, *vidua*, and women who are

not yet married, *virgines* an important distinction that gets lost with the more inclusive and broader social category meant by the word unmarried.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	ix
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Methodology	3
Chapter II: The Word <i>Vidua</i> in the 2nd Century B.C. Roman Comedy	7
Adjectival use of the word <i>vidua</i> in Roman Comedy	24
Chapter III: The Word <i>Vidua</i> in Roman Prose From the 1st Century B.C....	31
The use of the word <i>vidua</i> in Cicero	31
The use of the word <i>vidua</i> in Livy	37
Chapter IV: The Word <i>Vidua</i> in Roman Poetry From the 1st Century B.C. .	66
Adjectival use of the word <i>vidua</i> in Roman Poetry	67
Substantive use of the word <i>vidua</i> in Roman Poetry	87
Chapter V: Conclusion	97
Bibliography	103
Vita	109

List of Tables

Table I:	Instances of <i>Vidua</i> in the 2 nd Century B.C. Roman Comedy	30
Table II:	Instances of <i>Vidua</i> in the 1 st Century B.C. Roman Prose	65
Table III:	Instances of <i>Viduitas</i> in the 1 st Century B.C. Roman Prose	65
Table IV:	Instances of <i>Vidua</i> in the 1 st Century B.C. Roman Poetry	95
Table V:	Instances of <i>Vidua</i> in the 1 st Century B.C. Roman Philosophy	96

Chapter I: Introduction

The study of Roman women and their roles in Roman society is fundamental to Roman history. The focus of Roman cultural and social historians on the Roman family and its structure resulted in monographs on Roman wives, mothers, daughters and widows. The fields of art history, philology and archaeology have also yielded copious studies on various types of Roman women and their representations in literary and visual evidence of various genres and artistic media. All of these scholarly contributions play an important role in illuminating the fundamental position that Roman women held in sustaining and perpetuating the Roman state.

This precise inclination to learn more about the role and status of specific groups of Roman women is what led me to this fairly neglected topic. The category of Roman women that I chose to investigate, in a project that first began as an examination of a cultural and social history, was Roman widows. This preliminary topic of analysis of Roman widows and widowhood in Republican Rome was how I first encountered the word *vidua*. The few historical studies which focus on Roman widows and their lives in ancient Rome seem to spend little to no time on defining the actual term *vidua*, its meaning and use in literary sources of the second and first centuries B.C.¹ This lack of analysis of the word *vidua* itself and its meaning in scholarship provided the perfect opportunity for research. Thus the primary role of this project is to provide a thorough

¹ For a social analysis of Roman widows during the Republic and Roman Empire see McGinn 2008, 26-36 and Venour 1990. For a historical study of lower class Roman widows in the Roman Empire see Mueller 2004, who spends one page of her dissertation on Roman widows defining the term *vidua* see pg. 7. For a discussion of Roman widows in early Christian communities see Winter 2003.

analysis of the meanings and uses of the word *vidua* in the literary sources of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.

The conclusions of the painstaking examination of each instance of the word are then used to answer the question of what can we learn from the word about Roman widows and, more commonly, no longer married women of the last two centuries B.C.; as well as the stereotypes which emerge from the literary sources of these particular groups of Roman women. Therefore before undertaking a social history of *vidua* – or Roman women who are no longer married and its various sub-categories such as widows, divorcées, abandoned women and women whose husbands have been away for long periods of time - it is necessary to identify each of the instances in which the word *vidua* is used in the sources to mean one of these specific types of Roman women; when the word is being used more broadly to mean indistinguishably all no longer married women; as well as its metaphorical and ironic meanings found exclusively in Roman poetry. This examination of the word's various uses and multiple meanings is the ultimate aim of this study for the literary sources of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. Furthermore, this in-depth analysis provided an opportunity to call to attention the importance of translating *vidua* with the appropriate English word or phrase that conveys the nuanced meaning of the Latin word acquired from its specific literary context or the specific group of women that is encompassed in this broad social category which traditionally had been interchangeably used for all no longer married women.

Methodology

The organization of this paper reflects the two main criteria of the project that separate it from most philological and social historical studies. The first limitation is chronological. Unlike most social histories on a specific group of Roman people - whether it is defined by age, gender or class - that survey the group across all of Roman history and therefore literature, I chose to narrow my project to the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. and focus on the use of the word within the literary sources of this period without looking at the later sources written during the Roman Empire. I am using this paper as a case study in which only historically contemporary sources are used to discern the meaning of the passage and the word without relying on the literary sources written in later periods.

Therefore the primary organizational element of this paper is chronology; starting with the earliest literary sources where we first see the word *vidua*. Thus the opening chapter focuses on the use and meanings of the word *vidua* in Roman comedy, our earliest context for the word. The third chapter is chronologically limited to the authors of the 1st century B.C. initiated with a discussion of Cicero, who appears first on the timetable, and his use of the word *vidua* followed by a thorough analysis of Livy's passages containing the word *vidua*. The fourth chapter focuses on the poets of the 1st B.C. with a less rigid chronological structure due to the contemporary nature of the poets with one another - although the fourth chapter is framed by the earliest poet, Catullus, of the 1st B.C. and the last, Ovid. This methodological aim of not using literary sources from the period of the Roman Empire to gain insight back into Republican and early Empire

sources hopes to highlight the importance of analyzing passages within their own contemporary context as well as pointing out the limitations that the passages hold in reconstructing their meaning during their own time and literary context which later sources seem to obstruct.

The second criterion for this paper was to analyze the passages in which the word *vidua* appears after deriving the meaning of the word from the content of the passage and its broader context within the literary narrative. In other words no specific question was applied to the passage until after understanding what the passage tells us about the meaning of the word *vidua*, and, in the instances where the word clearly meant a specific category of no longer married women, the question of what it can tell us about those women was then asked. Only through this approach was I able to concurrently limit and at the same time expand the scope of the word *vidua* from widow to no longer married women but not include the not yet married group of Roman women into its definition.

Furthermore the chronological focus and the analysis of the passage without a specific historical question also allowed for optimum cognizance of factors such as authors' literary aims, the influencing elements of genre, temporal setting of the work and its effects on its content. Therefore the second way in which this project is an experimental case study is in the presentation of its analysis. The organization of the content within the three main chapters of the Report is focused on in-depth discussion of individual passages one at a time. If the goal of this project is to provide an exhaustive analysis of the context of the word *vidua*, its use and meaning as well as provide an even stronger argument for redefying the meaning of the word *vidua* during this period in time;

then this individual presentation of the evidence strengthens the aims of the project through analyzing every instance of the word within this time period rather than limiting my arguments to the passages that only support my redefinition and span across the whole period of Roman history.

The compilation of my data, meaning the collection of every instance of the word *vidua* in Latin literature from the last two centuries B.C., began by referencing the word in the Oxford Latin Dictionary. This task was followed by multiple word searches for various morphological forms of the word *vidua*, accomplished with the aid of a software program called *Diogenes*, a search engine implemented by the Packard Humanities Institute (PHI) database. In addition, I also used the online search engine provided by the Perseus Digital Library, which significantly accelerated the process of compiling all the instances of *vidua* in extant Latin sources. During this compilation process I discovered that that word *vidua* is not limited to one grammatical or syntactical use and that its adjectival form can be found in also masculine and neuter genders.² All the known instances of the word *vidua* and its various morphological forms are presented clearly in the tables organized by time period and genre and will be discussed thoroughly in three main chapters of the Report.

The total number of the instances of the word *vidua* both as an adjective and noun in the literary sources of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. is 57. This total, as mentioned above, includes non-feminine adjectival forms of the word that modify groups of men

² Although it is important to note that the masculine form only appears as an adjective describing group of men or specific mythological male figures but never as a substantive adjective (noun) suggesting that it was not used as a social category for no longer married men as it is of no longer married women. No such adjectival use is found in Roman prose of this time.

and inanimate objects primarily found in Latin poetry of the 1st B.C. significance of which is discussed thoroughly in Chapter 4. Although there is one extremely important instance of the masculine form in Roman comedies of Plautus, a form of poetry dating to the 2nd century, which the later 1st century poets most likely adopted for their own use as both forms of poetry manipulate words to subvert and undermine social norms whether to achieve various emotional effects out of their readers such as laughter or gender role reversal one of the defining elements of elegiac poetry. This transition into the realm of Roman comedy provides the perfect opportunity to begin our analysis of the multifaceted term, *vidua*.

Chapter II: The Word *Vidua* in the 2nd Century B.C. Roman Comedy

The focus of this chapter is on the earliest uses of the word *vidua* found exclusively in Roman comedy of the 2nd century B.C. The majority of the instances are located in Plautus' comedies. The word *vidua* shows up twelve times as a substantive adjective in five different comedies written by Plautus and once as an adjective describing a group of men in the play *Mercator*. In Terence it is found only once in *Heauton Timorumenos* with the peculiar adjectival use describing a group of women, a use which is not found in Plautus. The first part of the chapter will focus on the twelve most common uses of the word *vidua*. This section will provide a comprehensive analysis of the word's meanings as well as its social implications by postulating, when possible, the question of what can the passage tell us about Roman no longer married women, and, when specifically stated, widows.³ The second half will focus on the two unique adjectival uses of the word: the first in Plautus' *Mercator* and the second as Terence's only use of the word.

The comedy *Cistellaria* opens with a conversation between Syra, a former slave, her daughter Gymnasium, a courtesan; and Selenium.⁴ The dialogue begins with Selenium thanking the two women for being such good friends to her, in reply Syra assures Selenium that women of their kind need to stick together in imitation of the *matronae* who build strong friendships amongst themselves which they then use in an

³ It is interesting to note that we have no explicit use of the word *vidua* in all of Roman comedy to mean explicitly or specifically the modern narrow definition of widow.

⁴ The first act of the play is centered around establishing the occupation and status of the three women, as well as the unfortunate state of Selenium's personal life of no longer being able to marry Alcesimarchus, a man with whom she has been living with out of wedlock but with permission from her mother.

attempt to crush the *orbem* of Syra, her daughter, and suggestively Selenium since she is included in the type by Syra.⁵ The class of the three women is revealed to the audience by Syra at the end of her monologue where she informs Selenium that her mother and Syra once they were freed became *meretrices* and now assumingly since she is old and unattractive, Gymnasium has taken up the occupation under her mother's initiative.⁶

This revelation leads Selenium to postulate the question of wouldn't it be better to give Gymnasium away in marriage (*dare nuptum*) rather than let her be a *meretrix*.⁷ To this Syra ironically responds that she allows her daughter to "marry" (*nubo*) a man every day and will allow her to "marry" each night (*nubet*), emphatically stating that she has never allowed her daughter to lie or go to bed "without a husband" (*viduam*).⁸ Here we see two different implied meanings of marriage. The first meaning is proposed by Selenium that is referring to the traditional institution of marriage between a man and a woman. However, Syra implies a subverted meaning of marriage: the verb *nubo* is standing in place for sexual intercourse, and more specifically, the act of prostitution. In this context the word *viduam* is placed within the subverted meaning of marriage. This

⁵ Syra's monologue is lines 23-39.

⁶ The contrast is drawn between *matrona*, a respectable woman and a *meretrix*, which etymologically means, a woman who earns "money", but by this time the word has come to mean a woman who earns money for sex, a prostitute. For a further discussion of treatment and role of women in New Comedy see Rosivach 1998.

⁷ Plaut. *Cist.* 40. *At satius fuerat eam viro dare nuptum potius.* (But it had been better to give her to a man in marriage instead.) Translation from Riley 1912, 189.

⁸ Plaut. *Cist.* 41-43. *Heia, haec quidem ecaster cottidie viro nubit, nupsitque hodie, nubet mox noctu: numquam ego hanc viduam cubare sivi. nam si haec non nubat, lugubri fame familia pereat.* (Heyday, now! Surely, she's married to a husband every day; she has both been married to one today, she'll be marrying again tonight. I've never allowed her to go to bed without a husband (without a paying costumer). For if she weren't to be marrying, the household would perish with mournful famine.) This is as specific of a meaning as can be achieved since there is no mention of the reason for the state of deprivation. Translation from Riley 1912, 189.

ironic context then makes the actual meaning of *viduam* be without a paying customer and not the surface definition within the institution of marriage that would give it the traditional connotation of being no longer married or deprived of a husband. The surface definition of the word *viduam* cannot be more specific than a no longer married woman or a woman deprived of a husband because the reason for the deprivation is not stated. Therefore this use of *viduam* is not exclusive to Roman widows but instead refers to the much broader category of no longer married women. Plautus, in order to make a joke, uses ironically both *nubere* and *viduam*, which the audience understands because by this point they are aware of Gymnasium's status as a *meretrix* – as well as the practical impossibility of marrying everyday.

Throughout the rest of the act Syra continues to display her disdain for traditional marriage; which she claims is more profitable for *matronae* while a *meretrix* needs the company of many men just like a flourishing city.⁹ The use of the word *conducibilest* recalls a direct association with money which a matron, due to her own wealth and the economic standing of her husband, can be financially secure in a monogamous relationship (marriage). While a working girl needs polygamy in order to accumulate wealth from multiple sources since a marriage to a male of an equal economic standing will not provide her with financial security. The rejection of marriage and the use of the word *vidua* could suggest that Syra and her daughter will never actually be part of *vidua*

⁹ Plaut. *Cist.* 77-81. *Matronae magis conducibilest istuc, mea Selenium, unum amare et cum eo aetatem exigere quod nuptast semel. verum enim meretrix fortunati est oppidi simillima, non potest suam rem obtinere sola sine multis viris.* (That is more suitable to a married woman, my dear Selenium, to love but one, and with him to pass her life, to whom she has once been married; but, indeed, a Courtesan is most like a flourishing city; she cannot alone increase her fortunes without a multitude of men.) Translation from H.T. Riley 1912, 190.

category since they are not limited to the definition of the word in its framework of marital status or that Selenium's version of "marriage" is better because she will never be a *vidua*, - a women without a husband. Even though the passage does not provide us with useful demographic information regarding the social group of no longer married Roman women and does not specifically speak of Roman widows, it does gives us a glimpse into the diverse perception of marriage which Roman women of lower classes must have held and the survival strategies that they employed when traditional marriage offered little to no prospects.¹⁰ Just as importantly the passage illuminates a well-constructed example of ironic displacement, a crucial element of the genre of Roman comedy, that plays an important role in shaping the meanings of words as well as raising awareness about the primary placement of the needs of genre before realistic representations of social groups.¹¹

The second instance of the word *vidua* appears in Plautus' *Curculio* within a dialogue between Phaedromus, a young man, and Palinurus, his servant. The context of the passage involves Phaedromus leaving his house during the night to see his beloved while Palinurus interrupts his exit and inquires about the nature of his departure. He asks if Phaedromus is planning on committing a shameful deed: specifically ruining his

¹⁰ This passage can be used to better understand the views on marriage of Roman women from different strata of society and complicate the one dimensional definition of marriage of upper class Roman citizens as I hoped to briefly demonstrate in my analysis of this passage. The different survival strategies employed by lower class women must have had a real affect on their perception of marriage.

¹¹ The ability to learn something about no longer married Roman women from this passage is obstructed not only by the literary goals of the play but also by the comedic elements that make up the genre of comedy. In other words it's the construction of the joke that is more important than social realities.

reputation by laying a trap for some respectable woman.¹² In reply Phaedromus exclaims that the place of his interest is a house of Cappadox the *leno*. Palinurus, relieved to hear his master's plans, gives him a piece of what soon appears to be ironic advice.¹³ The servant claims that no one is keeping Phaedromus away from this place just like no one can prohibit someone from using a *publica via* as long as he does not take a route that is enclosed by a fence – otherwise, understood as off-limits or taboo.¹⁴ Further, no one is forbidding him from buying what is publicly (*palam*) for sale, which in the context of the passage, would refer to a female slave - here holding status of a *meretrix*; who can either literally be bought or make her livelihood by selling her body as a service.

The status of the female slave, or the *meretrix* is contrasted with the respectable types of women from whom Palinurus warns Phaedromus to abstain. The word *vidua*, a no longer married woman, is placed in a list with two other primary marital groups of Roman women that of a *nupta*, wife or a married woman; and *virgine*, a maiden or not yet married women.¹⁵ These types of women, including *vidua*, were considered by

¹² Plaut. *Curc.* 25-26. *Num tu pudicae cuipiam insidias locas aut quam pudicam esse oportet?* (Are you not laying a trap for some modest beautiful one, or for one that should be modest?)

¹³ The “advice” foreshadows Phaedromus’ desire to buy the freedom of his beloved Planesium, who is currently under the ownership of the *leno*.

¹⁴ Plaut. *Curc.* 33-38. *Nemo hinc prohibet nec vetat, quin quod palam est venale, si argentum est, emas. nemo ire quemquam publica prohibet via; dum ne per fundum saeptum facias semitam, dum ted abstineas nupta, vidua, virgine, iuventute et pueris liberis, ama quid lubet.* (No one drives you away from there, nor yet forbids you, if you have the money, to buy what's openly on sale. No one forbids any person from going along the public road, so long as he doesn't make a path through the field that's fenced around; so long as you keep yourself away from the wife, the widow, the maiden, youthful age, and free-born children, love what you please.) Translation from Riley 1912.

¹⁵ *Iuventute* and *pueris liberis* could be interchangeably applied to the either sex as the specific gender is undeterminable, although it most likely is talking about boys the scope of this paper does not allow for a full exploration of its implications. It is safe to postulate that sexual misconduct with “minors” was frowned upon by Roman society at this time. Therefore, the last two groups *iuventute*, a youthful girl/boy and *pueris liberis*, free born boys/girls are included in the list because they were equally considered by Roman social norms and laws as forbidden targets of socially acceptable sexual behavior making it the reason why

Roman society and the constitutive element of the custom as sexually unavailable due to their elevated status of Roman female citizens to a man such as Phaedromus, who was merely seeking to literally buy love and not start a legitimate marriage. The idea of sexual intercourse with any of these women outside of wedlock was perceived by Roman society as taboo and going against social norms even if it's not yet under legal jurisdiction.¹⁶ The specific meaning of *vidua* cannot be derived from the context, suggesting that here again it has a more general meaning of a woman who has been deprived of a husband (a no longer married woman) without necessarily pointing out how she came about to be in a state of deprivation. It is clear from this context that the word carries associations with women of proper Roman "citizenship" status simply from their ability to marry in Roman society. The seemingly exhaustive nature of the list would also point to the more inclusive definition of *vidua* that would include various subgroups of no longer married women, such as widows and divorcées.

The two instances of *vidua* that we have examined so far are used by Plautus to mean a broad and inclusive social category of all no longer married women. A narrower

Phaedromus should abstain from them as his motives were driven by sexual desire. Later we learn from the Digest that seduction of under age girls was punishable by exile, relegation or condemned to work in the mines, see D.47.10.25 and 47.11.2. Even more interesting the reason for the offence was not the young age itself but rather the girl's status as a not yet married woman ready for first marriage. See Rawson 1991a.

¹⁶ These social regulations and taboos against sexual freedom of unmarried women come to be legally monitored in the 1st BC. More specifically each class of women had their own connotations of being publicly recognized as unchaste. For example the reason why Phaedromus should stay away from wives is because extra-marital affairs were not socially acceptable especially for women who had to worry about providing legitimate heirs. The reason for avoiding maidens (*virgines*) and *viduae* in this context is related to the aims of Phaedromus who does not seem to be interested in following the social norms of marrying which is the only accepted option for either types of the women, who could only engage in sexual intercourse after marriage or re-marriage. For discussion of Roman views on sexual intercourse with *iuventus* and *puera* (*puer*) as well as for what these different stages of a child's life course entail see Laes 2011 and Rawson 1991a.

meaning of the word could only have been intended if an explicit statement for the reason of the no longer married state was made. Instead the broad definition of the word *vidua* contains a number of categories of meaning. The first and probably the largest portion of the *vidua* category, no longer married women, are women who have lost their husbands to death and therefore can be called widows with our modern narrow definition. The second largest possible category of *vidua* would be a group of women who have been deprived of husbands as a result of a divorce, therefore described by the modern term divorcée(s). The third and broadest portion of the Roman *vidua* category would be women defined by their no longer married state as a result of exile, abandonment, and prolonged military and commerce responsibilities.¹⁷

Therefore the question one leads to postulate is what did the Romans of this time think when they heard the word *vidua*? Did the word create an immediate implication with a specific social role of a modern widow or did it more broadly mean a respectable woman who no longer has a husband. The discussion of our sources seems to suggest that the definition of the Latin term *vidua* is directly related to the idea of no longer being married and consequently no longer having a husband and not to specifically contain the modern narrow sense of widowhood or being widowed, a marital status that is assigned to women who lose their spouses to death.

The lack of specific Latin terms for the various subcategories of no longer married women would point to the fact that the transition of status from being married to

¹⁷ As we will see briefly women with husbands on long military leaves fell into the broad social category of *vidua*.

no longer being married is the primary focus of the word's definition. Also it would suggest that the principal social function of *vidua* is to signal to the Roman audience that the woman has acquired a new marital status of being no longer married and be less concerned with how that status came to be acquired. Otherwise if the word *vidua* was automatically understood by the Romans of this time as being exclusive to widows how would other women of no longer being married status be identified in Roman society? This exclusivity could not function in a society where women transitioned into a no longer married state for reasons besides deaths: dissolution, abandonment and prolonged separation from one's spouse as a result of various professional responsibilities. Furthermore we will see the variation with which the word *vidua* is used to mean various subcategories of no longer married women in Roman comedy, which if it superficially meant widow to the Romans could not be easily achieved.

In the comedy *Menaechmi* the word *vidua* shows up four times.¹⁸ The first instance takes place when we see Menaechmus scolding and arguing with his wife about her constant nagging of his whereabouts and activities. Menaechmus, from the start of his monologue, uses consecutive insults to make his point of how angry and irritated he is by her behavior. Following the insults Menaechmus immediately presents his wife with an ultimatum, either the wife stops her displeasing behavior or he will send her out of his house to see her father.¹⁹ The warning is set up as a conditional clause which reads “*praeterhac si mihi tale post hunc diem faxis, faxo foris vidua visas patrem*” and literally

¹⁸ Plaut. *Men.* 113. as well as 720, 726, and 727. (One time in scene 2 of act I and three times in scene 1 of act V.)

¹⁹ Plaut. *Men.* 113.

translates “in addition to that, if after this day you do the sort of thing to me, I will force you out of my doors, as a no longer married woman, to see/visit your father.”²⁰ Beyond the literal reading there is also an implied meaning of the threat, which is that Menaechmus will divorce his wife. The inferred sense suggests a more specific meaning for the word *vidua* in this particular context, that of a divorcée.

It is important to take note that the particular social status of a divorcée is not derived from the word *vidua* itself but from the context of the passage. The necessary context clues such as *foris* and *patrem* set up the conditions under which Roman society understood the process of divorce, meaning the transition from one household to another. If the husband is threatening to send his wife from his house back to her father’s house then intentions as well as the process of divorce are made clear to the observers of the play. The same can be said about how members of a Roman community would recognize women as divorcees either by the hearsay from which the specific reasons for her unmarried state are provided or from noticing that the woman is no longer physically present in the house of her still living husband.²¹ Therefore even though divorce was a reality in Roman society women who became divorcees were placed into a much broader category of no longer married women under the term *vidua*, and were only identified as divorced from the specifics of verbal communication or physical observation. This

²⁰ Plaut. *Men.* 113.

²¹ It is important to keep in mind that the physical transition of a woman from her ‘married’ house to the house of her father was a much more concrete signifier of marriage dissolution in the ancient world unlike in our modern society married couples who often go through temporary separation move out without the definitive association with divorce. Our society also has marital statuses such as separated, domestic partnership, unmarried partners and others, which are not applicable to the Roman world. Therefore it is important to be careful in applying modern categories to a place where they might not have existed at all or where they were not perceived as statuses by the social conscience.

supports the idea that Roman women were not associated and identified with specific marital statuses such as widowed and divorced but instead fell into three broader groups of married, never married and no longer married. The third category is the most vague and comprehensive due to the larger number of factors that could be responsible for placing women into this new status, but once the woman is part of the no longer married population her identity and status is defined by and derived from her state of being no longer being married and not from how she came to be in that state.

The next three nearly consecutive instances of the word *vidua* are concentrated in a span of eight lines.²² The circumstances of this scene seem to represent the inverse of the previous episode. The wife of Menaechmus who was previously threatened with ‘divorce’ is now proclaiming that she herself prefers her life to be *viduam*, that of a no longer married woman or, more specifically as constructed by the context, a divorced woman than be with a husband that treats her so poorly.²³ The Menaechmus of this episode is not the man she thinks he is but is rather her husband’s twin brother Sosicles, responding that he doesn’t care whether she chooses to endure the marriage or decided *sis abitura a viro* (to leave her husband). To this the wife reiterates her threat of *vidua vivam* (a divorced life) even more emphatically which can be felt by the brevity and *gravitas* of

²² Plaut. *Men.* 720-728.

²³ Plaut. *Men.* 720-721. *Nam med aetatem viduam esse mavelim, quam istaec flagitia tua pati quae tu facis.* (For I prefer that my life be as a divorcée than suffer this vile conduct of yours, which you carry out.) It is also possible that *viduam* is an adj. modifying *aetatem* but the meaning of a *vidua* life would remain the same meaning a divorced life or no longer married life that would transfer to the status of the speaking female character.

her phrases.²⁴ In this case since *vidua* is following the future participle *abitura*, which suggests that the wife is threatening to physically leave her husband, denotes once again the process of divorce. This explicit threat of divorce is what gives the word *vidua* in this context a narrower meaning of living as a divorced woman rather than the more general definition of *vidua* of no longer being married. Here we once again see not only the multiple layers of meanings but also the development of a narrower definition of *vidua* throughout the context of the narrative. The agency behind the threat of divorce has shifted between male and female characters but the conditions which it created remained the same thus making sure to retain the nuanced meaning of *vidua* as divorcee in all the instances.

Lastly the fed-up Sosicles exclaims that as far as he is concerned she can live *vidua*, a divorcée or no longer married woman, as long as Jupiter reigns the skies.²⁵ The vagueness of the language in this interaction is important in establishing the way in which the Romans communicated their understanding of the process of divorce as well as acknowledging the change in their marital status. The use of vague language or the lack of a specific Latin term for a divorcée suggests that no clear distinction is drawn between being a divorcée and a no longer married woman or a woman without a husband. The only reason we know that the word *vidua* means the specific status or modern social category of divorcées is because of the explicit content of the lines discussed above. If this line was found as a fragment its narrow meaning becomes lost. Sosicles' wish for the

²⁴ Plaut. *Men.* 726. *Quas fabulas? non, inquam, patiar praeterhac, quin vidua vivam quam tuos mores perferam.*

²⁵ Plaut. *Men.* 727-728. *Mea quidem hercle causa vidua vivo, vel usque dum regnum optinebit Iuppiter.*

wife to remain a *vidua* (divorcée) for practically forever heightens the humor of the scene since the permanent state of this marital status would be perceived as going against the Roman social norms and expectations held for divorced women who in ancient Rome were legally and socially free and even expected to remarry.²⁶ This is an example of social subversion crucial to the construct of comedy. Within eight lines the word *vidua* adopts and utilizes a variety of meanings as well as the limits of its scope. Thus the flexibility and ambiguity of the word reconfirms the fact that *vidua* cannot be associated with a specific marital status but instead functions as a generalized social marker for women who are no longer married and are once again available to enter into a new marriage or in other words for remarriage.²⁷

In *Miles Gloriosus* the dichotomy between married and no longer married women is clearly demonstrated. The slave Palaestrio whose role it is to convince Pyrgopolinices that the beautiful ‘wife’ of Periplectomenus is in love with him starts to plant the seed of deceit by describing the “affection” the woman holds for him.²⁸ Pyrgopolinices, after inquiring about her social status, whether she was free born or a freed woman, and after receiving the answer that she was a free woman, he proceeded to ask about her marital status of whether she was *nupta* or *vidua*. The question sets up a clear dichotomy between

²⁶ In the context of the 3rd and 2nd BC it might be possible to postulate that remarriage must have been common due to the large number of females deprived of husbands due to the high military active years. On the other hand in the case of divorce at this time it is impossible to establish the frequency or popularity of the practice.

²⁷ It will become clear throughout the paper that the Romans hold a clear distinction between not yet married women, who are looked upon as entering their first marriage and no longer married women, who were perceived by the Romans as remarriage.

²⁸ The audience is aware that this is a trick devised by Palaestrio to help release Philocomasium from Pyrgopolinices so that she can return home and with her real love Pleusicles. Thus the plan is to convince Pyrgopolinices of this new woman’s affection so that he agrees to dismiss Philocomasium since he can’t have both women living with him in the same house.

a woman who is in wedlock and a woman who is no longer married excluding the third, the never or not yet married. The slave answers that she is both *nupta* and *vidua*, Pyrgopolinices is perplexed by how one woman can be both married and no longer at the same time. Palaestrio explains that it is because she is a young woman married to an old man. The conversation moves from that point to her character suggesting that Pyrgolinices was satisfied with the answer of how she could be considered both. The woman is described as *adulescens* and her husband as *sene* in order to emphasize the age difference between the spouses.²⁹ This emphasis on the husband's old age suggests that the old man can no longer perform the necessary procreating role in perpetuating and legitimizing a marriage thus making his legal wife a '*vidua*' (no longer married) since she belongs socially closer, through her lack of sexual behavior, to women who according to Roman norms do not participate in sexual activity outside the institution of marriage. The old age of Periplectomenus could also allude to his soon approaching departure from this world, which would make his young wife a widow, thus transferring her marital status to the narrower subcategory of the social category of all no longer married women, *vidua*. Although this second reading would be more feasible if a direct mention was made of his poor health in the context of the play.

Palaestrio's trap comes to its successful conclusion at the very end of the comedy. Pyrgolinices was fooled into coming to the house of Periplectomenus where he was told his admirer was waiting for him. As it turned out Pyrgolinices was ambushed and captured by the old man who started beating him mercilessly for trying to *subigitare* (lie)

²⁹ Plaut. *Mil.* 966. *Quia adulescens nuptast cum sene.*

with his wife.³⁰ Pyrgolinices, scared of what might happen to him, exclaims that the slave told him that the woman was a *vidua*.³¹ This line is directly connected with the earlier conversation between Pyrgolinices and Palaestrio, making it obvious that Pyrgolinices is lying about not knowing her real and legal marital status. Pleading for mercy on the basis of seducing a *vidua* instead of a *nupta* would only save Pyrgolinices from the husband's punishment and not the legal repercussions.³² Although it is interesting to note that according to later Roman laws women categorized as *vidua* did not have sexual freedom and were expected to conform to sexual inactivity until they were legally remarried.³³ Thus if the intentions of Pyrgolinices were merely to seduce the woman his claim for defense that she was a *vidua* would not excuse his socially inappropriate and possibly illegal behavior.³⁴ Sexual activity with no longer married women and other women in a marriageable position was perceived by Roman society as a threat to the traditional institution of marriage and was strongly discouraged. The potential consequences of extra-marital intercourse such as illegitimate children undermined the very basis of Roman family structure and its continuation. Unless his plan was to legitimately marry the girl, in which case they would either have to wait till the old man died or the act of her infidelity would provide the grounds for divorce. Recalling the treatment of *vidua* in

³⁰ Plaut. *Mil.* 1402. *Cur es ausus subigitare alienam uxorem, impudens?*

³¹ Plaut. *Mil.* 1409-1410. *Non volui nec factum est: viduam hercle esse censui, itaque ancilla, conciliatrix quae erat, dicebat mihi.*

³² We know that later in Roman period the legal punishment for sleeping with a *vidua* were less severe than for sleeping with married women. See Gardner 1986 for a discussion of sexual offences and their legal repercussions in Roman society. For the legal and social difference between *stuprum* and adultery see Gardner 1986, 121-125 and 127-131.

³³ This of course is retrojecting 1st century B.C. and A.D. laws and norms to the second 2nd BC where things might have been different.

³⁴ The *lex Julia* made *stuprum*, unlawful intercourse with no longer married women, a criminal offense. D. 48.5.6.1, 34.1 and 50.16.101.

Curculio as one of the types of respectable women that were to abstain from extra-marital sexual behavior, Pyrgolinices' defense of seducing a *vidua* would only have diminished his punishment but not eliminated it. Furthermore Pyrgolinices, who remained legally liable for the offence of immoral sexual behavior, primary goal in this scene was to avoid the extra-legal revenge of the husband.

Plautus' *Stichus* begins with a dialogue between two sisters, Philumena and Pamphila. In the first thirty lines of the play we discover that the two of them were forced to part with their husbands, who have been absent for nearly three years.³⁵ The reason for this prolonged separation is a business venture, which the husbands thought to seek in faraway lands. Therefore the opening lines of the play draw a parallel between the miserable state of Penelope who is described as a *vidua*, having been *caruit* from her *viro*, with the two sisters, who by this point in their separated state from their husbands, can relate to Penelope's pain and suffering as well as fall into the same social category as Penelope of *viduae*.³⁶ The word *vidua* can be understood in two ways. The first is from the perspective of the sisters, who speak the word, and Penelope. These women did not consider themselves to be widows because they believed their husbands to be well and that they were soon coming back. Thus the word *vidua* through this lens merely emphasizes the condition of the women as being 'momentarily' separated from their husbands due to a prolonged voyage, not that they consider themselves to be widows or

³⁵ Plaut. *Stic.* 34. *Nam viri nostri domo ut abierunt, hic tertius annus.* (For this is the third year since our husbands have left home).

³⁶ Plaut. *Stic.* 1-5. *Credo ego miseram fuisse Penelopam, soror, suo ex animo, quae tam dui vidua viro suo caruit.* (I believe that Penelope was miserable, sister, from her very soul, who a *vidua* (a no longer married woman), for a long time has been deprived of her husband).

even no longer married due to their husband's absence.³⁷ This assessment adds a new layer of meaning to the word *vidua*, which can now be applied to women who have been separated from their husbands for a prolonged period of time as a result of military duties or financial prospects. On the other hand the second perspective would be of the father and his fellow citizens to whom the sisters would appear as no longer being married or even more specifically widows, after such a long separation from their husbands, who might have long ago perished in the sea or started new families in foreign lands. Therefore from the observer's or even to say from society's point of view the word *vidua* could suggest that the sisters' status in the community has shifted from being married to a state of no longer being married or since their husbands were carrying out military and commerce duties, both professions with high mortality risks, be considered widows. Whether they belonged to the broad class of no longer married women or the narrow group of widows they were perceived as women in a renewed state of marriageability and were expected to considered new marriage opportunities. In the following act we learn that their father asks the sisters to consider getting remarried for their own sake and his, confirming the idea that prolonged state of absence from one's spouse in a given community qualified a person to be considered a *vidua* or a woman who was no longer married in the eyes of society. What specifically did this new status mean for these women? This question does not apply to the multiple functions of the word that we encounter throughout Plautus' comedies instead it is a spectrum of meanings that are connected and exploited through their context. Here again we see *vidua* with layers of

³⁷ Plaut. *Stic.* 1-35.

meanings, for a wife separated from her husband a strong feeling and state of loneliness and separation, for the members of the community a transition of status for a woman from being married to no longer being married, as well as third alternative of being actually widowed as a result of the husbands real death, all of which could result in their renewed ability to marry.

In the second act of the comedy, the girl's father Antipho, comes to see his daughters to ask them to come home with him in order that he give them away in marriage at once. Before this proposition Antipho asks his daughter for advice, we learn that his wife, their mother, has passed away and that he is currently in the process of looking for a new *uxorem*.³⁸ He asks his daughter Pamphila which choice is the more preferable, to marry a *virginem*, a not yet married or never married girls or a *vidua*, a no longer married woman?³⁹ In the most general sense the question is whether to marry a woman who has never been married or one has previously been married but is no longer due to an unspecified reason be it death, divorce, abandonment etc. Here the word *vidua* falls into its broadest category of encompassing all types of women who have previously been married but no longer are such as widows, divorcees, abandoned women primarily to provide an antithesis to the types of women who have never been married, *virgo*. Even though both types of women in our modern sense fall into the broad category of unmarried women the Romans did not consider them to be part of the same social group.

³⁸ The death of his wife makes him in our modern sense a widower but no such status is attributed to the man.

³⁹ Plaut. *Stic.* 118-119. *Hau male istuc. age tu altera, utra sit condicio pensior, virginemne an viduam habere?*

The terms that are used to distinguish between the two types of women derive their social meaning from the detailed distinction in marital status between no yet married and no longer married women. Therefore the definition of *vidua* first and foremost reflects the specific marital status of Roman women who were at some point previously married but no longer are. Furthermore we once again see the word *vidua* show up in the context of marriage, or even more specifically in the case of Antipho's remarriage.⁴⁰ This further supports the idea that the use of the word *vidua* is a way for society to recognize women as being reintroduced on to so-called 'marriage market' verse *virgines* who are introduced for the first time. It provides women with a status that signifies their ability to remarry but does not provide a specific connotation of why the women are no longer married.

Adjectival use of the word *vidua* in Roman Comedy

This brings us to the second half of the chapter, which focuses on the two adjectival and in a number of ways exceptional uses of the word *vidua* in Roman comedy of the 2nd century B.C. The first instance is found in Plautus' *Mercator*, which is peculiar in both its adjectival use and unique in its masculine gender. In act IV of the play Syra presents a monologue to the audience regarding the unfair legal treatment and consequences that married women suffer in comparison to the impunity given to their husbands for the same offense of adultery. Towards the end of the monologue she states (Plaut. *Mer.* 826-29):

⁴⁰ In Cistellaria the repeated "*nupta*" of Gymnasium, who is referred to as a *vidua*, is also framed in an ironic construct and context of remarriage.

ecastor faxim *si itidem plectantur viri,*
si quis clam uxorem duxerit scortum suam,
ut illae exiguntur quae in se culpam commarent,
plures viri sint vidui quam nunc mulieres.

(By god, I'd give cause, if men were punished in the same way if any one should be keeping a mistress unknown to his wife, as those women are repudiated who are guilty of a slip, that there should be more divorced men than there are women now.)⁴¹

In the lines immediately beforehand Syra points out that married men are allowed to dissolve their marriages (*exigitur matrimonio*) on the slightest suggestion of a wife's infidelity, while the husbands themselves were free to keep a *scortum* without any legal repercussions since the wives did not have the authority to sue for divorce on that pretext at this time.⁴² Syra ends her outrage by concluding that if the legal punishments and social ramifications were the same for husbands and wives there would be more *vidui viri*, divorced men, than there would be *mulieres*, implied divorced women.⁴³ The word *vidui* is describing the hypothetical state and status of the Roman men if Roman wives had the ability to divorce their husbands on the pretext of infidelity. The reason for our ability to narrow down the definition of *vidui* to mean divorced men is a result of the

⁴¹ The translation for Plaut. *Mer.* 826-29 is from Riley 1912, 169.

⁴² Plaut. *Mer.* 826-9. The act adultery does not become a criminal offense until the *lex Julia*. A gender bias did exist between the two sexes in the stipulation of the law where a married woman who had sexual intercourse with any man besides her husband was guilty of adultery which men were punished only if they slept with a married woman. A wife could not prosecute the adulterous husband herself under the Roman law as no harm was perceived as done to her own marriage. It is important to note that this only applied to men who slept with married women, having affairs with prostitutes and concubines was not punishable by law. Although we know that by this time Roman women could simply divorce the unfaithful husband were as the passage above suggests that women did not have that ability. Roman women *in manu* were not able to divorce their husbands on their own accord.

⁴³ The legal ability for both husbands and wives to divorce each other unilaterally dates to the time of Cicero, unless the wives were *in manu*. For discussion of divorce in Roman society during the Roman Republic see Treggiari 1991, 7-31 and Gardner 1986, 81-93.

legal and technical nature of Syra's speech that provided the necessary contextual clues such as her multiple references to the dissolution of marriage and social repercussions of adultery. The narrowed definition of the word *vidui* as divorcés is constructed and limited by the explicit context in which it appears. The word *vidui* cannot directly reference a particular social category of Roman men because, as we saw above, the word *vidua* itself does not create a specific association with either one of its subcategories but rather is concerned with the broad social category of all no longer married women, how then its meaning be limited to divorcés?

Furthermore the parallel structure of *viri* and *mulieres* suggests that the word *vidui* is supposed to be applied to both the men and women. This exclusively female social status of *vidua* that we have seen throughout Plautus' plays is being transferred to Roman men in an act of a gender role reversal. This reversal is highlighted by the fact that men in Roman society were not defined by their marital status in the same way as Roman women were since social statuses of married, no longer married and not yet married women do not find identical parallels in social categories for Roman men. Also in the case of adultery the husband's marital status was irrelevant unlike for women whose marital status defined their social repercussions. The exclusive use of the word *vidui* in this one instance further suggests that this is not a concrete social category to which Roman males belong but instead points to its subversive nature appropriated by the genre of Roman comedy. In other words by describing the men with an exclusively female social category Plautus is subverting the actual structure and social conscience of Roman society. Furthermore the act of placing Roman males into categories of Roman women and by

taking away behavior perceived by Roman society as restricted to males, such as the ability to file for divorce and prosecute one's spouse, the passage directly undermines the very definition of Roman masculinity and appropriate social behavior.⁴⁴

The second and final adjectival use of the word *vidua* is the single instance of the word found in the whole corpus of Terence's plays. Out of the six surviving comedies *vidua* shows up only once as an adjective in *Heauton Timorumenos* (*The Self-Tormentor*) with no substantive uses.⁴⁵ The fifth act of the play begins with a long dialogue between Chremes and Menedemus in which Chremes discovers that his son Clitiphio has been enjoying a liaison with Bacchis, a *meretrix* with very expensive taste. Along with this discovery Chremes realizes that his slave Syrus has duped him out of ten minas. In his outrage Chremes promises to take such severe punishment on Syrus that he will not forget him as long as he lives.⁴⁶ Chremes further exclaims that after the punishment Syrus would not have dared to do to a *viduae mulieri* (deprived or no longer married woman) the things, which he has done to him.⁴⁷ Here the dative adjective *viduae* is describing the noun *mulieri*. This modifier is ascribing to the women a specific marital status and social group of no longer married women. A specific subcategory of no longer married women

⁴⁴ The historical implications of this passage are complicated by the question of whether a woman in a free marriage was allowed to initiate divorce at the time this play was composed and first performed. Therefore due to the complexity of the subject and the limitation of this paper on the word *vidua* the implication that this passages holds in regards to Roman marriage cannot be discussed in this paper.

⁴⁵ This comedy is an adaptation of the *Heauton Timorumenos* of Menander. The extent of Terence's "originality" and mere translation is a topic of active scholarly debate. See Lefèvre 1994 and Richardson 2006. A second instance of the word *viduam* is attested in a fragmentary manuscript of Terence's *Phormio* although the word itself is problematic since it does not fit the meter of the line and is accepted by most scholars to be replaced by *eam*, which is found in the majority of manuscripts of this text. As a result of its dubious nature and manuscript inconsistencies, I will refrain from using it in my study.

⁴⁶ Ter. *Hau.* 950-951. *Egone si vivo adeo exornatum dabo, adeo depexum ut dum vivat meminerit semper mei.*

⁴⁷ Ter. *Hau.* 953-954. *Non, ita me di ament, auderet facere haec viduae mulieri quae in me fecit.*

such widows or divorcées cannot be specified since the reason for the no longer married state is not mentioned nor can it be derived from the context. Furthermore the phrase *viduae mulieri* is not referring to any particular female in the play. Instead this is a generalized statement about a non-specific female who is described as a *viduae* in order to convey her vulnerable and unprotected state. The primary function of *viduae* in this context is to emphasize the fact that Syrus not only will not dare to deceive married woman but even no longer married women who are considered by Roman society or at least Roman men as easily susceptible to treachery and easy targets for deceit due to their spouseless state. The drastic comparison between a *viduae mulieri*, a weak woman, and Chremes, a wealthy and educated citizen, demonstrates the scale of his anger and the severity of punishment that is waiting Syrus who afterwards will not even be able to pull his tricks on the easiest of society's targets. The ironic overtones of the lines through the use of the words *exonatum* and *depexum*, which in this case stand in for physical beatings, lessen the strangeness of a Roman male admitting to be weaker than a weak woman since the context makes the comedic nature of the statement explicit.

This particular combination of the adjective *vidua* with the noun *mulier* is not found anywhere else not only in Roman comedy but in the rest of the literary sources dating to the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. Although it is worth briefly to point out that this unique combination is extremely common in Greek literary sources that pair the adjective χήραι with the noun γυναῖκες. This pairing is found as early as Homer and as late as Plutarch and Dio Cassius. More importantly this Hellenistic element could be suggestive of the extent to which this play is modeled off of its Greek original and caution against

using the stereotypes that are discerned about no longer married women as representative of actual Roman women. Although as we will see in the later chapters the stereotype of vulnerable and easily susceptible to treachery applied to the broad social category of no longer married women or *vidua*. In this particular instance the stereotype of being easily duped encompasses all types of women, who are without husbands such as divorcees, widows, abandoned women as well as women who have been separated from their husbands due to prolonged absence whether because of military or economic responsibilities. The common translation of the word *viduae* in this passage by the English word widow represents only one of the subcategories of a much broader social definition implied by the term *vidua* thus limiting the stereotype to only one specific group of women and in turn losing its encompassing nature. In order to account for the inclusiveness of the term when the context does not specify the reason for the no longer married state the word *vidua* in Roman comedy has to represent all no longer married women.

Table I: Instances of *Vidua* in the 2nd Century B.C. Roman Comedy

	Context	Form	Part of Speech	Meanings
1	Plaut. Cist. 42	viduam	substantive adj.	without a husband, “without a paying customer”
2	Plaut. Curc. 37	vidua	substantive adj.	no longer married woman
3	Plaut. Men. 113	vidua	substantive adj.	divorcée
4	Plaut. Men. 720	viduam	substantive adj.	divorcée
5	Plaut. Men. 726	vidua	substantive adj.	divorcée
6	Plaut. Men. 727	vidua	substantive adj.	divorcée
7	Plaut. Mil. 964	vidua	substantive adj.	no longer married woman
8	Plaut. Mil. 965	vidua	substantive adj.	no longer married woman
9	Plaut. Mil. 966	vidua	substantive adj.	no longer married woman
10	Plaut. Mil. 1409	viduam	substantive adj.	no longer married woman
11	Plaut. St. 4	vidua	substantive adj.	a woman separated from her husband, a no loner married woman, widow
12	Plaut. St. 119	viduam	substantive adj.	no longer married woman
13	Pla. Mer. 829	vidui viri	adjective	divorced men
14	Ter. Hau. 953	viduae mulieri	adjective	no longer married woman

Chapter III: The Word *Vidua* in Roman Prose From the 1st Century B.C.

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of all the instances of the word *vidua* in the literary sources of the 1st century B.C. written in prose. The majority of occurrences of the word are concentrated in only two authors, Cicero and Livy, the one exception to the rule being the use of the word *vidua* in Cornelius Nepos' preface to the *Lives of Eminent Commanders*.⁴⁸ In total there are twelve instances of the word *vidua* used strictly as substantive adjectives (nouns) and three instances of the abstract noun *viduitas*. The chapter is broken up between the authors into two sections, with the first part dedicated to the three uses of the word by Cicero while the second half focuses on Livy and his eleven uses of the word.⁴⁹

The use of the word *vidua* in Cicero

Cicero uses the substantive adjective *vidua* in two defense speeches: the *Pro Caelio* and the *Pro Caecina*.⁵⁰ Let us examine both of the instances in some detail. The *Pro Caelio* is a defense speech delivered by Cicero in the year 56 B.C. for Marcus Caelius Rufus, who was being prosecuted in the violence court (*quaestio de vi*). The charges brought against Caelius included public disturbance, damage to public property, taking money for the attempted murder of Dio and Clodia and finally the murder of Dio

⁴⁸ This passage will not be discussed in the paper since the part of the sentence in which the word *vidua* appears can not be made sense of and therefore prevents us from deciphering its meaning in this particular context.

⁴⁹ The Liv. Frag. LIX will be discussed separately in concluding chapter.

⁵⁰ An abstract noun *viduitate* is also found in the *Pro Caecina*. This is the only two instances in the whole corpus of Cicero that the word *vidua* appears. The word surprisingly does not appear in any of Cicero's letters that contain multiple women and men, which scholars know from other sources, to have been widowed, divorced, or no longer married. This observation postulates an interesting question of why weren't these women (men) described as *vidua*, and does this seem to suggest that no such social category existed.

in the house of Coponius.⁵¹ The focus of Cicero's speech was not on the actual charges but rather on attacking Clodia in an attempt to discredit her credibility as a reliable witness. The goal of this strategy was to frame the charges as mere pretext for Clodia who was looking for revenge on a man who no longer wished to associate with her romantically - in other words Caelius broke off the affair and Clodia did not take it well. Cicero creates an illusion that Clodia is the sole source of prosecution against Caelius and uses the speech to attack her moral character in order to convince the jury of her moral failings and severely weaken the credibility of the evidence brought forward by her.⁵²

The majority of attacks at Clodia's moral standing came from Cicero's passing comments about her "status" as a *meretrix* (*meretriciis*).⁵³ The comments created an illusion that she had the moral standing of a prostitute and not of an upright Roman matron.⁵⁴ The implication that she poisoned her husband, Metellus Celer, questioned her motives of bringing charges of attempted-murder against Caelius; Cicero also asserted the more direct and very emphatic claims about her sexual liaisons with different men including her own brother, implying a lack of sexual self-control and moderation.⁵⁵ The word *vidua* shows up in the context of two conditional statements, which Cicero claims are not referring to Clodia.⁵⁶ Instead of establishing a disassociation, this cautionary

⁵¹ For more detail analysis of the charges see Austin 1960 and D.H. Berry 2000 pg. 125.

⁵² Cic. *Cael.* 2

⁵³ Cicero referring to Clodia behaving as a prostitute and pointing out her extravagant sexual behavior see Cic. *Cael.* 2, Cic. *Cael.* 32, Cic. *Cael.* 35, Cic. *Cael.* 38, Cic. *Cael.* 49 and Cic. *Cael.* 62.

⁵⁴ The testimony of prostitutes was inadmissible in Roman courts see McGinn 2004

⁵⁵ For the implied accusation of poisoning her husband and incest see Cic. *Cael.* 63, Cic. *Cael.* 32, Cic. *Cael.* 36, and Cic. *QF* 2.3.20.

⁵⁶ Cic. *Cael.* 38. *Nihil iam in istam mulierem dico; sed, si esset aliqua dissimilis istius, quae se omnibus pervolgaret, quae haberet palam decretum semper aliquem, cuius in hortos, domum, Baias iure suo libidines omnium commearent, quae etiam aleret adulescentes et parsimoniam patrum suis sumptibus*

reassurance that the conditionals are not describing Clodia create a direct and vivid connection between Clodia and the hypothetical figure that Cicero claims he is talking about for the jury. All of the hypothetical aspects of the woman's sexual laxness, monetary extravagance and social misconduct were accusations raised directly against Clodia by Cicero in previous parts of the speeches, therefore it seems safe to conclude that the woman is no one but Clodia and the accusations are meant to sustain (reaffirm) her moral delinquency in the minds of the jury as well as reminding the jury of initial accusations.⁵⁷

Thus the second supposition that if there was a *vidua* (widow/no longer married woman) living *libere* (unrestrictedly), a *proterva* (imprudent woman) living *petulanter* (wantonly), a *dives* (rich woman) living *effuse* (extravagantly), a *libidinosa* (lustful woman) living in a manner of a prostitute are all descriptive elements that are aiming at further deteriorating the reputation of a female character witness, Clodia. It is interesting to observe that the word *vidua* is here used in a list of four substantive adjectives with four paired adverbs, the first and third are ambiguous and are only made negative with explicitly offensive adverbs, the second and fourth substantive adjectives carry more negative connotations and become even graver with a pairing of graphically insulting adverbs. Although we know that Clodia was a widow by this time, it is clear from the use of the 4 substantive nouns that *vidua* is not referring to a specific social category of

sustentaret; si vidua libere, proterva petulanter, dives effuse, libidinosa meretricio more viveret, adulterum ego putarem, si quis hanc paulo liberius salutasset?

⁵⁷ The hypothetical woman is no other than Clodia, and is not meant to be a generalizing descriptions of a certain group of women such as divorcées, widows, or women who are no longer married. The generalizations are rather focus on sexual extravagance and lack of self-control, which are criticism of both females and males at this times.

widows but instead refers to a much broader category of deprived women or more specifically women who are currently not under the legal and social control of a husband.⁵⁸ Therefore if Cicero is not making a negative generalization about Roman widows this passage cannot be used to deduce Roman stereotypes about Roman widows. Instead the passage provides a small glimpse into a stereotype of the Roman social anxiety that a woman without a husband was more susceptible to sexual excess and extravagance whether she was a divorcée, widow or other type of woman who was no longer married. Cicero by using the adverb *libere* (unrestrictedly) adds the sense of extravagance, lack of self-control and moderation to *vidua*, which on its own is a neutral term just like *dives*.⁵⁹ The negative use and derogatory meaning of the word *vidua* in this particular instance is first and foremost crucial to Cicero's defense strategy against the prosecution which included shifting the blame of the charges to Clodia and destroying her credibility as a witness. The specific function of *vidua* in the *Pro Caelio*, a category of women to whom Clodia belonged to due to the death of her husband, cannot carry over the negative connotations that it had in the speech to the broader social Roman views of widows. Instead the disparaging portrait that Cicero paints for the jury of Clodia is serving an integral part in his defense. The particular stereotype that Cicero creates is meant to represent Clodia, who is a widow, although other types of Roman women such as married women and "maidens" can easily fall into this very broad negative stereotype of a sexually extravagant female.

⁵⁸ Re-postulating the question of whether *vidua* was a social category for the Romans at this time.

⁵⁹ *Dives* only becomes negative when put in the context of excess, treachery or moral failings.

In the *pro Caecina*, Cicero represents Aulus Caecina who brought a lawsuit against Sextus Aebutius, in a case over the inheritance of the widowed Caesennia.⁶⁰ The will of Caesennia named Caecina, her second husband, the principal heir as well as mandating a small sum of money to Aebutius, a friend who provided financial guidance as well as acting on her behalf when buying her son's property which he now claims belongs to him and not Caecina.⁶¹ Cicero in an effort to try and show the jury the true motives of Aebutius dealings with Caesennia paints a less than favorable picture of Aebutius character. He states that Aebutius is the sort of person who *aleretur* was nourished by *viduitate* (the deprived state or widowhood) and solitude of Caesennia.⁶² This statement was meant to imply that Aebutius was a man who preyed on "available" or no longer married women and used them for his own profit rather than truly providing help that would benefit them. This implication is made explicit by phrases such as *cum aliquo suo compendio* (with some profit for himself), which are commonly repeated by Cicero throughout the speech.⁶³ This use of the abstract noun *viduitate* suggests a stereotype that we have previously witnessed in Plautus, of the so-called easily susceptible widow, who can fall under the wrong influence and be taken advantage of. The exact status of Caesennia as a widow we learn from the context of the speech as we are told that her first

⁶⁰ The suit was brought under the law *de vi armata*, aiming to recover a farm that allegedly was part of Caesennia's estate which Aebutius claimed as his own through the use of violence.

⁶¹ This piece of property is responsible for the suit. When Caecina decided to visit the land he encountered a band of men under Aebutius' control who denied him access and forcefully escorting him off the property threatening to kill him if he were to return. For the exact distribution of the will into three shares see Frier 1985 pg. 3. Cic. *Caec.* 15-21, provide an account of Caesennia giving Aebutius the commission to buy the farm and acting on her behalf at the auction in Rome, but clearly providing her own money for the land which Aebutius now claims to have bought the property for himself and not for Caesennia.

⁶² Cic. *Caec.* 13. *qui iamdiu Caesenniae viduitate ac solitudine aleretur.*

⁶³ Cic. *Caec.* 13 and 14.

husband, M. Fulcinius, died. Therefore *viduitate*, her deprived state becomes the more specific state of widowhood, from the content of the speech. This susceptibility stems from the fact that no longer married women do not have husbands that could protect them from men such as Aebitius. This stereotype is connected to one of the roles of an ideal Roman husband was to watch over and protect his wife from being corrupted by the vices of society and malice men. Therefore a woman who no longer has a husband is deprived not only of his physical presence but also his wisdom and advice that would keep her away from infidelity, being taken advantage of materially and physically by various form of treachery employed by *captatores* like men.

In the following section Cicero continues to deteriorate Aebitius' character by describing him as *mulierum adsentatoris, cognitoris viduarum, defensoris nimium litigiosi, contriti ad Regiam, inepti ac stulti inter viros, inter mulieres periti iuris et callidi* (a flatterer of women, protector of deprived women, an overly litigious attorney, a frequenter to the Regia, an inept and stupid lawyer among men but a just and shrewd lawyer among women).⁶⁴ The context of *vidua* is in a more general statement than of *viduitate* when we saw Cicero specifically referring to Caesennia's deprived state due to the death of her husband, making her a widow. Here on the other hand Cicero is referring more broadly to no longer married women and not specifically to widows. Thus making the claim that all deprived women who are in this state for whatever reason, either be it death, divorce or abandonment, are unsafe around men such as Aebitius. It is interesting to note that in this passage Cicero does make a generalization about Roman woman of his

⁶⁴ Cic. *Caec.*14.

own time whom he sees as being poor or inferior judges of men's true character which thus makes them vulnerable to manipulation by men of ill intentions.⁶⁵ Once again bringing to the foreground a stereotype that we have previously seen applied to deprived women in Roman comedy to an even broader category of all Roman women. It is also important to point out that another stereotype this time concerning Roman males is emerging from this passage, of a male who preys on deprived women, which we will encounter in Horace's Epistles.

The use of the word *vidua* in Livy

The substantive adjective *vidua* as well as the abstract noun *viduitas* together are found 10 times in the thirty-five surviving books of Livy's *Ab urbe condita*.⁶⁶ The nine instances of *vidua* are found alternatively paired with nouns such as *orbus*, *caelebs*, and *pupillus* (technically substantive adjectives), which in turn are important for discerning the meaning of *vidua*. Let us examine each of the instances within their own literary context.

In Livy Book I the word *vidua* is used three separate times. The first instance is in the context of a story about the courageous and selfless act of the Sabine women. During a renewed military struggle between the Romans and Sabines, a consequence of the

⁶⁵ It is important to keep in mind that this generalization plays an important role in Cicero's strategy of destroying Aebutius' respectability as an outstanding or proper Roman male citizen. Whether or not this statement can be directly taken to represent the general mentality of Roman males about Roman females is questionable and it is crucial to remember that its first and foremost use and meaning are framed within the context of the speech and the function that it serves Cicero and his client. Although it is safe to say that stereotype of a male who take advantage of unmarried women is in the minds of the Romans at this time. In later time people who befriended *orbi* or *orbae* in the hope of gaining some sort of financial profit were known as *captatores*, I am unaware of this term being used in this sense as early as 69B.C. when the Pro Caecina was delivered and (or) published.

⁶⁶ This is excluding the one instance of the word *viduas* found in the *Periochae* of Book LIX.

Roman abduction of Sabine women, Livy informs his readers of a daring and virtuous act carried out by the Sabine women to stop the bloodshed. The Sabine women all-together rush into the battle, parting the battle lines and selflessly proclaiming to their husbands and fathers that:

“Si adfinitatis inter vos, si conubii piget, in nos vertite iras; nos causa belli, nos vulnerum ac caedium viris ac parentibus sumus; melius peribimus quam sine alteris uestrum viduae aut orbae uiuemus”

“If you cannot bear the relationship between you, if you cannot bear the marriage bond, turn your anger upon us, we are the cause of the war, we are the cause of wounds and death to our husbands and our fathers, better that we die than live as widows or orphans, without either of you.”

(Liv 1. 13. 9-13)

This proclamation Livy presents in the form of direct speech, placing the self-sacrificing words directly into the collective mind of the Sabine women who see death as more preferable an outcome than a life without their male counterparts. The virtue of the professed self-sacrifice comes into clarity when viewed together with the original objective of the abduction, which was the preservation and continuation of the Roman state.⁶⁷ The Sabine women, through the union with Roman males, were meant to give rise to a new generation of Romans. This prospect was now under threat due to the continued bloodshed, which would ultimately leave the women widows therefore making it impossible to carry out the important role of perpetuating the Roman state. Therefore the active intervention of the Sabine women in the conflict between the men was responsible for bringing compromise and ultimately the survival of Rome itself. Livy chooses this passage to demonstrate (uses this passage as an example of) how a perfect Roman, be it male or female, ought to have behaved in a given situation, choosing death as an act of

⁶⁷ Liv. 1.8.4-7. See Brown, 1995.

self sacrifice in order to secure Rome's future than the selfish decision of living and putting Rome's needs after your own will to live. It is an ideal that Roman citizens of Livy's own time were meant to aspire to thus placing the needs of the state before their own.⁶⁸ Thus the complete reading of the passage reveals the patriotic nature of the women's action to intervene and put their own lives at risk and why ultimately a life as a widow is not worth living which is not because the women cannot live without the men but because the women cannot live without Rome which would not exist if the men were to die at the hands of their fathers and brothers. The self-sacrifice for the good of the state motif is found often within Livy's work both through the guise of male and female characters.⁶⁹ Livy's ultimate aim was to use the Sabine women as representations of ideal and virtuous behavior, patriotism and sacrificing one's life for Rome's preservation.

It is also important to point out that the context of death and war in the passage tells us the precise meaning of *vidua* as clearly being widow and not the broader and more common meaning of a no longer married woman, although as I have continually stressed Roman widows belonged to this broader social category.⁷⁰ This reiterates the point that the specific meaning of *vidua* can only be illuminated from its context and that the term had to be clarified with content in order for it to mean specifically widows since the broader social category included all women who were no longer married. With this specific meaning in mind let us closer analyze the use of the word *vidua* in the passage and see if it can tell as anything about the illusive Roman widows.

⁶⁸ An ideal presented continuously throughout Livy's history.

⁶⁹ See Brown 1995, Miles 1992, and Mustakallio 1999.

⁷⁰ For all the instances of the word *vidua* meaning the modern narrow term widow see Tables II, III and IV.

The story of the selfless act carried out by the Sabine women in stopping their male relatives from killing one another is serving a specific purpose in the story of the foundation and solidification of Rome. The courageous intervention and self-sacrifice of the married women lead to the pacification and expansion of the Roman state, a crucial step in Livy's narrative of Rome's early formation. Therefore Livy uses this passage to show us his own ideal of how perfect "Roman" matrons ought to have behaved in a similar situation meaning at a time when Rome's progeny was at stake, in choosing death before a life of a *vidua* (widow) or an orphan. This decision of death over lives as widows is specific to the purpose that the women are playing in the passage, which is the selfless bringers of peace between the two sides and ultimately the saviors of Rome's future. It is not a reflection of what Roman women were expected to do if the state of Rome was not under threat. This episode is used to display a virtuous act committed by women for the good of the state and should not be understood or imply that Romans considered a life of a widow as pointless or not worth living. Instead the word *vidua* here is used to describe the hypothetical social category to which the Sabine women would belong to if the war was to continue but as a result of their intervention not only was there peace but the city of Rome grew in size and secured a line of future Romans. Another reason as to why the women might have chosen to sacrifice themselves is because their own lives did not mean the collapse of the Roman state as the men could have continued searching for female companions in other parts of Italy, but the death of their Roman husbands would mean the demise of Rome. The self-sacrifice of Sabine women in the passage is an example of the highest display of loyalty that a woman could show towards her family

and an even more virtuous for her country. The actions of the matrons to interfere in the male sphere of battle stopped their married status from becoming one of widowhood thus preventing us from making any actual speculations about the social role of widows in Livy's own time. No such drastic self-sacrifice was ever expected of Roman woman under normal circumstances, and this idealistic representation of a "virtuous" woman who chooses death over a life of a widow is drastically different from the social reality (and rather has no basis in the reality) of Roman society in the 1st B.C. Here I am referring to the social expectation, which becomes a legal obligation under the *lex Iulia*, of no longer married women between the age of twenty and fifty to remarry within a certain time period.⁷¹ No distinct stereotype of widows can be detected in the passage instead what we have is an idealistic representation of virtuous matrons, the stereotype of the selfless matron standing in for Roman virtues.

An interesting intertextual relationship comes into light through the examination of the word *vidua* and *viduos* found both in Livy and Ovid's versions of the Sabine women narrative. In the *Ars Amatoria* Ovid uses the word *viduos* to describe the 'wifeless' state of the Roman men (*viros*) right before the abduction of the Sabine women while Livy on the other hand uses the word *viduae* to talk about the possible husbandless

⁷¹ For the discussion of the *lex Iulia* and its various legal ramifications see Balsdon 1962, Gardner 1986 pg. 52, Treggiari 1991 and 1991a. The *lex Papia Poppaea* extended the period available for remarriage for widows up to two years and for divorced women eighteen months, which under the previous moral law was only a year for both types of women. In order to get a sense of the frequency and common occurrence of divorce and remarriage in the late Republic read through Cicero's letters. I am unaware of a study that focus specifically on the occurrences of divorce mentioned in Cicero's letters that I hope to carry out myself at a later date and which the scope of this paper does not allow for.

condition of the Sabine women if the war resumes.⁷² Furthermore I would like to suggest that the underlying themes of love, lust and ultimately sex of the *Ars Amatoria* as well as the contextual focus of passage on reproduction hints at a more metaphorical reading of the word *viduos viros*, as sexless men. The erotic overtones of the line “*cum iuvit viduos rapta Sabina viros*” (when the rape of the Sabine women gave pleasure to the sexless men) are made clear with the use of the verb *iuvit*.⁷³ The word in Ovid is employed, as an adjective describing the kind of men Romans were while in Livy *viduae* is a substantive adjective referring more specifically to the potential new social category and status of the Sabine women. Therefore the Roman men until the abduction of the Sabine women in the context of an elegiac love poem are described as sexless, or in other words they are deprived of the sexual act because of their lack of female sexual partners. The purpose of the abduction of the women Ovid does admit to have been ultimately for marital and not merely sexual purposes in *Ars* 1.125, which implies that the true aim of the abduction was reproduction, a process without which the Roman state could not continue to exist and produce a new generation of Roman citizens.⁷⁴ Ultimately it is important to note that the word is used interchangeably to represent the deprived state of both genders, making it no longer during it is no longer exclusive to the female sphere in the time of Ovid.⁷⁵ Ovid’s use of *viduos* to describe the Roman males, with a focus on being sexual deprived,

⁷² Ov. *Ars*. 1.101-102. *Primus sollicitos fecisti, Romule, ludos, Cum iuvit viduos rapta Sabina viros*.

⁷³ Ov. *Ars*. 1.102.

⁷⁴ For a thorough discussion of the sources that deal with the various narratives of the Sabine women see Brown 1995, Hemker 1985, Holleman 1986, Miles 1992 and Piper 1971.

⁷⁵ For a further discussion of the word *vidua* as no longer being limited to the female sphere in Roman poetry see Chapter II and IV.

at a time before the abduction of the Sabines women creates a nice counterpart and balance to Livy's use of *vidua* at a later time in the narrative of the Sabine women, after their marriage and all the way in the foreshadowed future as being potentially deprived of their marital status and husbands.

The second instance of the word *viduae* in Book I is found in the context of constitutional and military reforms Livy attributes to Servius Tullius. Livy informs us that after the distribution of the infantry Servius enrolled twelve centuries of knights from the leading men of the state as well as forming 6 other centuries, of which three have been previously instituted by Romulus.⁷⁶ Each of the new centuries was given 10,000 asses, which came from the state treasury (*ex publico*) for the purchase of horses.⁷⁷ Another provision was assigned to *viduae* who were responsible for providing the financial support (finances) of 2,000 asses for the maintenance and nourishment of these horses every year.⁷⁸ Livy provides no further explanation of whom exactly he means by the word *viduae*.⁷⁹ As we all well know by this point the word *vidua* is a very broad category that encompasses subdivisions of different types of deprived women and only through context can we tell which category is being discussed. Livy's lack of clarification suggests that the term is referring to all women that fall under the broad category of being no longer being married. One definitive thing, which is illuminated by the next sentence

⁷⁶ Liv 1 43.8. and 43.9. *Ita pedestri exercitu ornato distributoque, equitum ex primoribus civitatis duodecim scripsit centurias; sex item alias centurias, tribus ab Romulo institutis, sub iisdem quibus inauguratae erant nominibus fecit.*

⁷⁷ Liv 1 43.9. *Ad equos emendos dena milia aeris ex publico data.*

⁷⁸ Liv. 1 43.9. *et, quibus equos alerent, viduae attributae quae bina milia aeris in annos singulos penderent.*

⁷⁹ The word *viduae* in this context is most commonly translated as widows or unmarried women.

that can be added to the type of women *viduae* is representing, is their wealthy status. Livy states that “*Haec omnia in dites a pauperibus inclinata onera*” (all these burdens were turned from the poor to the rich). This statement reinforces the connection between “elite” financial standing and *viduae* who are included and described as *dites*. Also the mere financial burden of paying 2,000 asses must have meant that only women of wealth could afford the annual contribution and signaled a certain elevated status in Roman society. This elite financial standing makes it tempting to connect the *viduae* of the passage with the men who were enrolled in the new centuries of *equites*. Could the *viduae* be referring to the women who were left widows, became divorcées or were no longer married for some other reason to men from highest rankings of Roman society? The proximity of the formation of the new centuries with the new obligation of the *viduae*, as well as Livy’s lack of elaboration of who these women strongly suggest that the answer is very probable. The question that we are unable to answer is whether Livy is actually talking about a specific subcategory of these wealthy deprived women, such as widows, divorcées or potentially having some technical meaning.

A passage in Cicero’s *De Re Publica* provides us with an alternative account of the establishment of the organization of the knights and its responsibilities. Unlike Livy who assigns the reforms to Servius Tullius, Cicero tells us it was the work of Tarquinius Priscus.⁸⁰ Another variation in the accounts is the Corinthian tradition that Cicero gives to the practice of maintaining or feeding (*alendis*) the cavalry through the contribution not only of *viduarum* but also *orborum*, which can be translated as orphans or childless

⁸⁰ Cic. *Rep.* 2.36.

fathers.⁸¹ Cicero just like Livy does not elaborate on the definition of *viduarum* which suggests that all women under the heading of being deprived, in other words no longer married, were expected to pay the tax as long as they fell into the appropriate wealth class. This shows once again the importance of being or having elite financial standing that would put you into this category of deprived women, in other words the primary qualifications were wealth and a marital status of no longer being married. It is interesting to once again postulate whether a particular social status was a necessary qualification as well as, did only *viduae* of patrician men pay the tax in the beginning and were later joined by the wealthy plebeian *viduae*. There are multiple reasons for why *viduae* women were the ones responsible for the maintenance tax, for example Rudd suggests that it was a way for unmarried women as well as childless men in the case of Cicero to compensate for not providing Rome with their share of manpower.⁸² In my opinion the reason for the tax has less to do with not providing manpower as it does with creating a sense of contribution from every facet of Roman in this case elite society. In other words wealthy *viduae* who did not have a chance to remarry and thus did not directly support a spouse who provided a military and (or) political service to the state but yet received its benefits were asked to contribute in a different way from married women who were seen to be doing their contribution through their duties in marriage and towards their husbands. Thus all members a.k.a citizens of Roman society had to contribute in their own way to the maintenance of the state.

⁸¹ See Rudd for *orborum* as childless fathers and *viduarum* as unmarried women pg. 46 and for orphans and widows see Zetzel 1995, pg. 191, Nicolet 1966, pg. 36-45. Livy only assigns the tax to *viduae*.

⁸² See Rudd 1998 pg 188.

Both of these passages add an element of wealth to the word *vidua*, which is specific to the context of the maintenance tax of the horses. It does not mean that every time a Roman heard or saw the word *vidua* they associated it with wealth or elevated social standing. What we do see in these two passages is, Livy and Cicero using the word *viduae* in the context of a technical provision, which was a way to signal to the audience the women's potential wealthy financial status through their ability to afford the tax. Therefore the connection with wealth should not be associated with the broader category of *viduae* that includes all no longer married women since Roman citizens from any financial situation were able to marry and therefore ultimately be *viduae*.⁸³ It is also important to point out that the historical accuracy of this provision; its date as well as its Corinthian origins are highly unlikely. The provision about *viduae* was probably added to the tradition by 1st century authors who lived in a world where Roman *viduae* (no longer married women) possessed financial independence on par with elite men and were expected to contribute to the Roman state as a result of their financial standing. The Roman state needed to have access or the opportunity to take advantage of the money in the hands of *viduae* and therefore it is not surprising that we hear of provisions in the literary tradition of the 1st B.C. that apply to wealthy "independent" women.

The last use of the word *vidua* in Book I is found in section forty-six that discusses the conspiring plans of Lucius Tarquinius and at the time his sister in law Tullia

⁸³ Slaves of course could not marry and therefore do not fall into the category of *viduae*, but Romans from all levels of social strata and financial standing do. For the unofficial marriage practices among slaves see Mueller 2004. De-facto marriages between slaves were known as *contubernia*. *Contubernium* could also exist between free or freeborn with slaves.

against king Servius Tullius who was her own father.⁸⁴ Tullia's older sister was married to Lucius Tarquinius who she considered to be a real man and to be of true royal blood.⁸⁵ Tired of her own husband who lacked the ambition to become king she turned to Lucius Tarquinius her brother in law. The two were drawn to each other because of their similarly evil character.⁸⁶ In her attempt to convince Tarquinius to be with her and to take action she asserts that:

“et se rectius viduam et illum caelibem futurum fuisse contendere, quam cum impari iungi ut elanguescendum aliena ignavia esset.”

“it would have been better for her to be a deprived (no longer married) woman and for him to be without a wife than for them to be married to their inferiors so that they had to remain inactive through the cowardice of others.”

(Livy 1 46.7 35-38)

The inactivity is referring to the fact that Tullia's and Tarquinius' ambitions to take the throne away from Servius and institute their own royal power are hindered by their current spouses who lack the necessary audacity. The only way Tullia will get a chance to hold royal power is if she marries a man who has the same ambitions and the drive to achieve it by whatever means necessary. Therefore her exclamation informs us that she is no closer to becoming a queen, being married to an incompetent man, than if she was *viduam*, a deprived woman or no longer married. The fact that Livy could place such an assertion into the mouth of a female character suggests that a Roman woman of Livy's time had as much at stake from a marriage union as did men, meaning that women had their own goals and expectations from the men they married and the marriage itself.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Liv. 1 46.

⁸⁵ Liv. 1 46.6.

⁸⁶ Liv. 1 46.7.

⁸⁷ An important point that needs to be bore in mind when marriage is used by scholars as a tool for political alliances among the Roman elite in the Late Roman Republic. Roman women had their own expectations

In the lines that follow right after her assertion we learn that Tullia's husband and Tarquinius' wife are soon dead confirming the fact that Tullia succeeded convincing Tarquinius to take action and change his state of affairs as well as his marital status. The meaning of the word *viduam* in the context of the whole passage becomes clarified from merely being unmarried as *viduam* is commonly translated to no longer being married. Even though the statement seems to be saying that it would have been better for them never to have married the true intention that Tullia (Livy) are aiming to convey is the necessity for both of them to no longer be married to their useless spouses so that they can form a new successful union together. This emphasis on no longer being married is also supported by the soon fore-filled death of her husband making Tullia a widow, although she is one not for very long as we learn that Tullia and Tarquinius are united in marriage soon after the passing of their spouses.⁸⁸ Tullia is never strictly referred to as a widow but because of her husband's death we know she is one. The word *viduam* in her assertion before his death is known, is meant to foreshadow her soon to be state of widowhood which Livy does not need to make explicit since the word *viduam* includes the meaning.⁸⁹ Therefore Tullia who we know to be a widow for a brief time falls into the subcategory of *vidua* as well as the broader category of *vidua* of no longer being married. Here I would like to reaffirm the fact that the word *vidua* contains a sense of once being

from their marriages and should not be seen as political bargain chips. Interesting enough Livy places all of the responsibility of initiating the up coming events such as the death of their spouses and her father into the hand of the woman, Tullia. In other words it was Tullia who was responsible for starting all the trouble.

⁸⁸ Liv. 1 46.9.

⁸⁹ Also very rarely in the sources of the 2nd and 1st B.C. do we see women who are widowed at some point in their life be referred to as *viduae* to mean specifically widow since almost always they would get remarried thus making their time as widows a very small and (insignificant) part of their life, making it unnecessary to call attention to it, and instead the focus is usually on the act of remarriage. A common phenomenon found through Cicero's letters.

married, which is crucial to its very definition and therefore it cannot include or mean women who have never been married that are included in the category of unmarried women.⁹⁰

Book XXIV of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, also contains three instances of the word *vidua* two of which are found in section eighteen. Before beginning our discussion of chapter eighteen, let us first focus on the third instance of the word *viduae* in chapter twenty-six of Book 24. This reversal in order is necessary because the meaning of 24.18.13-14 is illuminated and closely connected to various chapters in book 34, requiring a cohesive analysis of both books side by side. The focus of Livy 24.26 is on a woman named Heraclea, the daughter of Hiero and wife of Zoippus, who decided to go into voluntary exile. The theme of the episode is one of tragedy and cruelty where we witness the final moments of Heraclea's life along with her children. The broader context of the episode is within Livy's discussion of the political events that take place in Syracuse after the assassination of Hieronymus.⁹¹ The wives of two praetors (*strategi*), Adranodorus and Themistus, were perceived by the public as the source of their tyrannical disposition because the women were of tyrant blood, Damarata the daughter of Hiero and Harmonia daughter of Gelo.⁹² The praetors proposed a motion in the heat of the moment that no women of tyrant blood should be left alive and ordered the execution

⁹⁰ The word *vidua* has to include in its meaning the sense of being deprived of something, and women who never had husbands cannot be considered to have been deprived of them, in its most literal sense. Although it could potentially be used to talk about single older women who are perceived by society to have been deprived of marriage itself and everything that comes with it. The sense of having been deprived the one thing that everyone in a society, with the institution of marriage, is expected to have at some point in their life.

⁹¹ Liv. 24 21.2.

⁹² Liv. 24 25.6.

of all its descendants, which was swiftly approved by the immoderate assembly.⁹³ This edict brings us to Heraclea who being the daughter of Hiero was sentence to death.

After discovering that soldiers were sent to kill, Heraclea taking her two *virginibus* (unmarried) daughters fled to find refuge in a shrine, praying for the protection of the gods.⁹⁴ It is important to note that Livy uses the word *virgo* which means a woman or a girl who was not yet married or in other words never been married when talking about Heraclea's daughters, as will become clear below. Furthermore the young age of the girls is revealed during Heraclea's pleas with the soldiers to spare their lives on the account of their age, which would deter even an *iratos* (deranged) enemy.⁹⁵ All of these contextual elements play an important part in understanding the meaning and significance of the word *vidua* in this episode.

This brings us to the use of the word *vidua* itself that is found in a question postulated by Heraclea "*quod ab se cuiquam periculum, a sola ac prope vidua et puellis in orbitate degentibus esse?*" (What danger was she to anyone, a solitary woman and nearly a no longer married woman, and her girls living in a state without their father?)⁹⁶ The word *prope* before *vidua* is calling to our attention the status of Heraclea's husband as an exile, which on the one hand does not nullify her marriage to him or takes away her marital status, which would make her an actual *viduae* or a no longer married woman in the eyes of society. On the other hand the word *vidua* contains an aspect of being

⁹³ Liv. 24 25.10-11.

⁹⁴ Liv. 24 26.2.

⁹⁵ Liv. 24 26.11.

⁹⁶ Liv. 24 25.8.

physically separated from one's spouse suggesting a sort of deprived state as a result of geographical distance between the married couple. This use of the word *vidua* to suggest a physical separation between spouses and not necessarily dissolution of a marriage was previously observed in the context of Plautus' *Stichus*.⁹⁷ Therefore the *prope vidua* that I am translating as a nearly no longer married woman means more specifically, a woman nearly deprived of her marital status there by her husband.

Heraclea's status of pretty much being a *vidua* coincides with Livy's description of her daughters as living in a state of *orbitate*, which in this case does not mean orphanhood since we know the father is alive but due to his physical absence from them, the children are perceived as being in a fatherless state. This connection between marital status, family structure and the words *vidua* and *orbitate* is reaffirmed by Heraclea's proposition to be banished from Syracuse to Alexandria so that an *uxorem* (wife) can be with her *virem* (husband) and *filiis* (daughters) with their *patrem* (father). To take this a step further the marital status of Heraclea's daughters as not yet married made clear by the word *virgo* as well as their young age connects their 'pseudo' state of bereavement with their father meaning that they belong to the social category of *orbas* while Heraclea a married woman bares the potential deprivation of her married status which is connected to the loss of her husband thus qualifying her as belonging to social group of *viduae*.⁹⁸

The conclusion of this episode is graphically gruesome. After the throat of Heraclea was

⁹⁷ For previous discussion see pg. 21-24. It is interesting to point out that in Livy's own time in Rome, Roman citizens punished with exile and who lost citizenship rights were considered no longer legally allowed to marry and whose current marriages were dissolved.

⁹⁸ I wish to suggest that the word *orbas* should not include the meaning widow or be translated as such (Liv. 3.3.9) because it is a social category that has a clear association with a deprivation of a father of girls that are not yet married. For further support on this claim see the discussion of passage 34.7.12 pg. 60-62.

cut, her daughters splattered with their mother's blood died from the wounds inflicted upon them by the soldiers.⁹⁹

The focus of this chapter is on domestic activities of Roman censors in the year 214B.C. who began to regulate public morals and keep in check the vices that have sprung up as a result of the war.¹⁰⁰ Livy informs us that the Roman treasury during this time in the Second Punic War is in a state of insolvency and because of this the censors are unable to let out contracts for public services such as temple maintenance.¹⁰¹ Different sectors of the Roman population come forward and urge the censors to continue to put out contracts as if there was money in the treasury by consenting to wait for the war to be over before receiving payment from the state.¹⁰² Livy further relates to us that:

“Cum haec inclination animorum plebis ad sustinendam inopiam aerarii fieret, pecuniae quoque pupillares primo, deinde viduarum coeptae conferri, nusquam eas tutius sanctiusque deponere credentibus qui deferebant quam in publica fide, inde si quid emptum paratumque pupillis ac viduis foret, a quaestore perscribebatur.”

“During this inclination of the minds of the people (pleb) to relieve the poverty of the treasury came about, first the money of the orphans then those of widows began to be brought in, with those people who were bringing them believing that they were putting the money down no where more secure and inviolable than in the in public trust, after that if anything had been bought and prepared for orphans and widows, it was written out in length by a quaestor.”

(Livy 24 18. 13-14)

In summary the passage is reaffirming a time and environment in which the Roman people felt inclined to sustain the insolvency of the treasury. Livy intentionally stresses

⁹⁹ Liv. 24 26.13-14.

¹⁰⁰ Liv. 24 18.2. For a similar sentiment on the consequences of war see Caesar *de Bello Civili* Book 3. This passage is commonly used by ancient historians such as P.A. Brunt and N. Rosenstein to answer a demographic question about the size of the pool of military manpower available to the Roman Republic at the end of the 3rd century B.C. See Brunt 1971 and Rosenstein 2002.

¹⁰¹ Liv. 24 18.10.

¹⁰² Liv. 24 18.11.

the fact that different types of Roman citizens were voluntarily offering ways most suitable to their profession and status to alleviate the financial burden of the war - for example the contractors carrying out services without getting paid and the slave dealers not receiving payment for the slaves they sold to the state.¹⁰³ The third act on behalf of the public to relieve the impoverishment of the treasury that Livy presents is the *conferri* or collecting of the *pupillares* and *viduarum pecuniae*, which was now placed into the possession of the state treasury. This transaction made it possible for the state to use the money directly to aid the war effort as well as keep a regimented account of the spending on any purchases or provisions for *pupillis ac uiduis* through the use of a quaestor.¹⁰⁴ The state's supervision over the money seems to be enacting a guardian (tutor) type role that traditionally was held by husbands for deprived women and fathers for *pupillis*. Livy ascribes the state with these male "protectors" type roles not as a reflection of Roman misogynistic views on the incapability of deprived women to manage their own financial affairs but because Livy, who is very concerned with tradition is creating a past in which his traditional ideals were upheld so that his readers can see the contrast between now and then. This evocation of tradition should not be taken outside of Livy's narrative as the general opinion of the masses on Roman deprived women since it is playing a crucial role in his literary and historical goals of using the past to teach, present and record Roman ideal feats. Furthermore the public inclination of voluntary helping the state that is created and thoroughly emphasized in this passage (24.18.13-14) has a strategically

¹⁰³ Liv. 24 18.11-12.

¹⁰⁴ A political office connected with finances and government expenditure.

important role to play ten books later in a speech of Lucius Valerius.¹⁰⁵ The last sentence of passage 24.18 begins “*manavit ea privatorum benignitas ex urbe etiam in castra*” (this kindness of private citizens spread from the city to the military sphere). This statement further solidifies Livy’s emphasis on the generosity and willingness of all private Roman citizens, including deprived women, to give whatever they could in order to preserve the state from destruction that was a reality in the year 214B.C.

The agency of *viduae* is not brought to the foreground in 24.18.13 because the focus of the whole chapter is on the communal effort to relieve the state and to demonstrate many different kinds of Roman citizens helping Rome in its fight against Carthage. Livy sets up these selfless deeds to be referenced as pieces of evidence in the speech of Valerius in Book 34 that not only involves deprived women but all Roman women. Let us now turn to the discussion of the *Lex Oppia* in the context of which we find two instances of the word *vidua* and the one instance of the abstract noun *viduitas*. Livy informs us that the *Lex Oppia* enacted in 215B.C. mandated that no woman be allowed to possess more than half an ounce of gold, wear multi-colored clothes, and ride in a carriage in the city unless it was a religious festival.¹⁰⁶ The reason for the law is a highly discussed topic of scholarship for which scholars have provided various interpretations.¹⁰⁷ The one definitive link that can be made is the close temporal

¹⁰⁵ Liv. 34 5.10 and 34 6.14.

¹⁰⁶ Liv. 34 1.3.

¹⁰⁷ Since the reason for its enactment is of secondary importance its interpretations will be limited to a footnote. Some scholars have suggested that the *Lex Oppia* is a sumptuary law which was meant to restrain female luxury during a period of time when wealthy Roman women were acquiring large sums of money as a result of heavy war casualties see Astin 1978, 26 and Culham 1982, 786-793 and also see Hänninen 1999, 50-51. Pomeroy 1975, 178-80 suggested that it was a confiscatory measure that used the women’s gold to

connection to the devastating defeat at Cannae in 216 that brought about a number of rigorous religious stipulations that were meant to reestablish the piety of Romans towards their gods. This focus on piety could have also lead to the enactment of the *Lex Oppia* that moderated public female behavior with the intention of acquiring prosperity and divine favor for the Roman state.

Livy's account of the law is found in the context of its attempted repeal in the year 195 by two plebeian tribunes M. Fundanius and L. Valerius.¹⁰⁸ The adamant opposition to the repeal was presented by a direct speech through Cato, one of the consuls for that year. After Cato's speech and the speeches with similar sentiment of the tribunes who declared to veto the bill, Livy presents the arguments of Valerius to repeal the law.¹⁰⁹ The first instance of the word is found in passage 34.5.10, the context of which is the first half of Valerius' speech that focuses on the historical deeds and public appearances of Roman matrons that always aided the state in some way.¹¹⁰ Livy goes on to list in a chronological order the courageous deeds of Roman women such as the rushing of the matrons in between the battle lines to stop the war between Romans and Sabines, the women's role in deterring Coriolan from attacking Rome and the financial assistance of women to raise the remaining ransom that the senate promised to pay to the

aid the war effort. Gruen 1990, 144 proposes a symbolic reading of the law with the aim of establishing a sense of patriotism between the rich and poor. Vishnia 1996, 90-91 suggests that it was meant to be a preventive measure against excessive spending of women.

¹⁰⁸ Liv. 34 1.2-3.

¹⁰⁹ Liv. 34 5.1.

¹¹⁰ Liv. 34 5.8 states: *semper bono publico*. Here Livy is referring to the public actions of Roman women, which always ended up being for the good of the state.

Gauls besieging the city.¹¹¹ Finally even in the most recent war, referring to the Second Punic War Valerius postulates a question with an affirmative answer “was it not the case that when the money was needed, the money of the deprived women (*viduarum*) assisted the treasury?”¹¹² This last feminine feat for the good of the public is directly referencing passage 24.18.14, which informed us ten books earlier of the occurrence of this very deed that took place 19 years before the appeal of the law. Therefore the feat mentioned in book 24 is being used by Livy as evidence in Valerius’ speech providing an affirmative answer to his question of whether or not the *viduarum pecuniae* helped to sustain the insolvent treasury during the Second Punic War. The content of Valerius’ speech is using information that is coming directly out of Livy’s narrative highlighting its artificiality as well as literary goals being primary to historical accuracy.

The second half of the speech focuses on showing the audience that the changing conditions of the state require with them modifications of laws. Since the laws passed in time of peace are often annulled by war and by peace those passed during time of war.¹¹³ Valerius begins by asking whether the *Lex Oppia* is an ancient law, which he confirms it is not, by telling us that it was passed during the consulship of Quintus Fabius and Tiberius Sempronius twenty years ago.¹¹⁴ This leads him to reason that if Roman matrons lived virtuous lives for all that time before the law, how then can the Roman people who are opposing the appeal fear that once the law is gone Roman women were going to

¹¹¹ Liv. 34 5.8-9.

¹¹² Liv. 34 5.10 *nonne et, cum pecunia opus fuit, viduarum pecuniae adiuverunt aerarium.*

¹¹³ Liv. 34 6. 6.

¹¹⁴ Liv. 34 6. 9.

become excessively luxurious. Valerius goes on to once again list all the extraordinary measures that were implemented during the Second Punic War for example the use of slaves as soldiers bought by the state with the promise of payment after the war as well as contractors under the same promise continued to carry out their responsibilities. The list overlaps with the one we saw in passage 24.18.11-13 which described the sacrifices private citizens had to make, be it voluntarily, to survive those tumultuous times and provide the state with the aid and resources it required. The Roman people were making these adjustments first and foremost to protect their own families then their land and by doing so were ultimately defending the state itself. Valerius continues the list by talking about the monetary contributions that were made first by the senators, then by the rest of Roman men who were able to provide financial support, *conferebamus* all their gold and silver for the public use.¹¹⁵ The third on the list of monetary support mentioned by Valerius are the deprived women and *pupilli*. Unlike in passage 24.18.13 the agency of depositing the money is placed directly into the hands of deprived women by making them the clear subject of the verb as well as using *suas* to emphasize their ownership as seen here “*viduae et pupilli pecunias suas in aerarium deferebant*”.¹¹⁶ Livy makes the connection between the two passages emphatic by using a series of the same words or repetition of which *deferebant* is of particular importance since it clarifies the agency of relative pronoun *qui* in passage 24.18.14 as being both *viduae* and *pupillares* who *deferebant* (bringing) their own money into the treasury. The reason why *viduae* are not

¹¹⁵ Liv. 34 6.14. Livy uses the passive infinitive form, *conferri*, in passage 24.18.13-14 when talking about the money of *viduarum* and *pupillares*.

¹¹⁶ Liv. 34 6.14.

given direct agency in passage 24.18.14 is because the focus and emphasize of the whole chapter is placed on the feats of all private Roman citizens while in the context of the *Lex Oppia* Livy (Valerius) shifts his efforts to highlighting the deeds of different groups of women, especially those of *viduae*. Valerius ends this part of the speech by asking why all other emergency measures that were enacted during the time of war have been abandoned now that there is peace and prosperity in Rome, leaving only the *Lex Oppia* in practice.¹¹⁷ It is important to remember that the *Lex Oppia* concerned solely women of wealth and elite status thus leaving this one practice behind must have been a grave sign of disrespect not only towards the Roman woman from the highest branches of Roman society but also their marital partners. This discriminatory law against elite and wealthy Roman women was repealed on the next day following the speeches of the two men, with a large group of women gathered outside the doors of the two tribunes until the threat of a veto has been completely withdrawn.¹¹⁸

The four instances of the word *vidua* in books 24 and 34 I have consistently translated as deprived women rather than the narrower and predominant translation of the word as widows.¹¹⁹ Here I would like to clarify why the word means the broader group of deprived women, without the inclusion of never married women, rather than specifically widows. The word *viduae* as I have previously pointed out is only meant to include women who are no longer married and not women who have never been married. These

¹¹⁷ Liv. 34 6.17-18.

¹¹⁸ Liv. 34 8.1-3.

¹¹⁹ For various translations of book 24 see D. Spillan and C. Edmonds 1884, 917, Yardley 2006, 215, Scullard 1969, 350, Evans 1991, 52, and Vishnia 1996, 227 n. 148.

four occurrences of the word *vidua* further support this claim primarily through their pairing with varied versions of the word *pupillus*. This word is the one that ought to include the women and girls that have not yet been married and are considered orphans as a result of the death of their fathers. The word *vidua* on the other hand applies to females that had a husband at some point in their life but due to whatever condition are no longer in the state of marriage and therefore have suffered a loss of a spouse. This distinction fits well with the organization and structure of a Roman family where a married woman creates a new family with her husband thus women who are *viduae* are the ones that have been deprived of their current family were as *pupillares* included 'women' who have not yet started their own family and the deprivation is considered to be of their current family which in their case is their parents, fathers. The fact that the context of the passages is within the Second Punic War where Rome suffers heavy losses could suggest that the number of widows in this broader group of deprived women was quite large compared to divorcées and abandoned women although it did not exclude these women from providing financial aid to the state. These women were often left with children and property that they wished to protect as much as widows and should not be excluded from the category of *viduae*. Furthermore the context of all four instances is within lists of voluntary contributions by different types of Roman citizens with the collective effort to relieve the state constantly reiterated why would these particular women be excluded. The giving of *viduraum pecuniae* is one of the many ways in which Roman citizens, women, were helping the war. Livy also tells us that *matronae*, the married group of women, were asked by the state to contribute money to Juno Regina in the year

217B.C.¹²⁰ It is also important to point out that Livy through this focus on the collective efforts of Roman citizens creates a sort of unifying “patriotism” which he employs as a historiographical tool in explaining one of the reasons why Rome was able to win the war. This of course is an idealistic reading of the Roman past and the actions of its citizens as putting the needs of the state before their own. The real motivation behind the sacrifices of private individuals as previously mentioned is the people’s drive to protect families and land from destruction and worse enslavement. Specifically in the case of deprived women who were left alone to protect their children, property and in some case elderly parents the contribution of money was the only direct act of protection that they could offer in reality to the safety of the state but to the safety of their *familia*. Livy is not concerned with the realities of warfare and its hardships on its citizens instead he wants to represent how an ideal citizen body would voluntarily sacrifice all it had for the security of the state so that he could instill his readers with the appropriate behavior in the time of crisis. Therefore ensuring the continuation of morally upright citizens for the protection of Rome if the future should call for it.

The one instance of the abstract noun *viduitas* that is encountered in the context of the *Lex Oppia* is found in passage 34.7.12 which reads “*et ipsae libertatem quam viduitas et orbitas facit detestandur*”(and even they themselves despise the freedom which a deprived state and orphan hood brings). This statement follows a number of emphatic exclamations made by Valerius reaffirming male control over their female counterparts, claiming that as long as males are preserved (*salvis*) feminine slavery is never shaken

¹²⁰ Liv. 22 1.17-18.

off.¹²¹ The strength of these claims is suppose to reassure the male audience whose views were expressed by Cato's speech as fearing that the appeal of the law will undermine the power of *patria potestas* and will allow women to act recklessly and excessively with money. Therefore the harshness of the exclamation is a rhetorical device to calm the fears of opposition and convince the audience that doesn't support the appeal to change their minds. These rhetorical aims of Valerius' speech to logically counteract the content of Cato's speech prevent us from using the statements as representative of Roman male views during Livy's time.¹²² Further Livy as a historian is in the process of constructing his own interpretation of why the *Lex Oppia* was abrogated and what reasons the men of the early 2nd century would have used to fight or defend the appeal. Therefore the interpretation Livy presents will be heavily influenced by the ideals, morals and traditional values he sees men on either side possessing.

The precise meanings of the words *viduitas* and *orbitas* are understood from their chiasmic arrangement with the words *filiae* and *uxores* that are also the antecedents of *ipsae*. On the one hand we have the wives or married women that acquire 'freedom' through the state of being no longer being married to their husbands although the reason for the newly acquired status is not specified in this case making the broader definition more appropriate than mere widowhood. The daughters on the other hand acquire freedom by being deprived of their fathers. This use of the two abstract nouns further

¹²¹ Liv. 34 7.12.

¹²² For a pejorative interpretation of the passage see L'Hoir 1992. Once again it is important to stress that the content of Valerius' speech for example his claim that women due to their frail nature have to endure whatever the men decide is meant to pacify the fears of men who Valerius is trying to convince and not represent Livy's misogynistic views of woman. For a summary of the roles played by different groups of women in Livy's narrative see Mustakallio, 1999.

supports the exclusion of never married women from the definition of *viduae*, since the majority of never married or not yet married women must have been of a relatively young age. This would mean that socially women of their age, around the time of first marriage, were still (considered to be) under the auspices of their fathers and immediate male relatives therefore their state of bereavement was identified with the loss of their fathers.¹²³ Only once the women were married did their bereavement come to be associated with their status as married women meaning the loss of a marriage and husband for whatever reason be it death, divorce or abandonment. The observation of connecting the status of bereavement with Roman family structure is made more emphatic in this passage with the words *uxores* and *filiae* clearly referencing and being in dialogue with the terms *viduitas* and *orbitas*. This study further highlights how significant a role marital status played in constructing the public identity of Roman women. In other words, the definition of *viduae* as a social group is first and foremost connected to the loss of marital status, women who are deprived of a marriage and secondly (implicitly) of husbands. Therefore it stands to reason that women who are not yet married cannot be defined or included in the *viduae* category because they do not undergo a loss of marital status as is implied by the status of *vidua*.

The last variation of the word *vidua* in the main text of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* is found here as an abstract noun *viduitate* in Book XL.¹²⁴ The historical context of the

¹²³ Further study is required in the field of epigraphy where women commemorated by parents are considered to be unmarried or not yet married versus women who are married being more commonly commemorated by their spouses. This creates another important connection between family structure, marital status and funerary commemoration.

¹²⁴ The *Periochae* of Book LIX contains the word *viduas*, which will briefly be discussed below.

passage is the year 182B.C. The Roman senate was gathered to hear the reports of Marcius who was sent to Greece and Macedonia to investigate their political and military activities. The news concerning Philip was of some concern to the senate. In Marcius' account of his findings overseas he informs us of Philip's cruel decision to kill all the children of the leading men whom he has already put to death. This provides an opportunity for Livy to describe a dramatic and dreadful event that resulted from Philip's edict to kill the surviving family member. The tragic destruction of Herodicus' household is the focus of Livy 40.4.1-15 that involves Theoxena, her sister Archo, their husband Poris and many of their misfortunate children. Livy informs us that Philip put to death the father and husbands of Theoxena and Archo.¹²⁵ The next sentence starts in this way "*In viduitate relictæ filiae singulos filios parvos habentes*" (The daughters were left in the state of widowhood, each having one small son).¹²⁶ The content of the passage meaning Livy's statement that the husbands of the two sisters were *interfecit* makes it clear to the reader that the word *viduitate* in this context has the narrow modern definition of widowhood rather than the broader state of bereavement as we saw in 34.7.12. Here it is important to point out that Livy who informs us that the women not only lose their husbands but also their father, chooses to use the word *viduitate* and not *orbitate* highlighting the women's bereavement of their husbands and not their father. Therefore even though we have a passage in the context of which we have both a death of a father and a husband the women's deprived status is defined by her husband where as if the

¹²⁵ Liv. 40 4.2. *Herodicum principem Thessalorum multis ante annis occiderat; generos quoque eius postea interfecit.*

¹²⁶ Liv. 40 4.2-3.

filiis were not yet married their status would depend on their father. The conclusion of this tragedy entailed the death of the two small boys at the hands of their mother Theoxena who believed that a death by her own hand was better than that of Philip as well as her own suicide.

Table II: Instances of *Vidua* in the 1st Century B.C. Roman Prose

	Context	Form	Part of Speech	Meanings
1	Cic. Cael. 16	vidua	substantive adjective (noun)	widow/no longer married woman
2	Cic. Caec. 14	viduarum	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women
3	Liv. 1. 13.3	viduae aut orbae	substantive adjective (noun)	widows and orphans
4	Liv. 1. 43.9	viduae	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women
5	Liv. 1. 46	viduam et caelibem	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married, widow foreshadowed meaning
6	Liv. 24. 18. 13	pupillares deinde uiduarum	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women
7	Liv. 24. 18. 14	pupillis ac uiduis	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women
8	Liv. 24. 26.	uidua et puellis	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married woman
9	Liv. 34. 5.10	uiduarum	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women
10	Liv. 34. 14	uiduae et pupilli	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women
11	Liv. Frag. LIX	pupillos, pupillas et uiduas	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women
12	Cor. Nep. 1.5	uidua	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women ?

Table III: Instances of *Viduitas* in the 1st Century B.C. Roman Prose

	Context	Form	Part of Speech	Meaning
1	Cic. Caec. 13	viduitate ac solitudine	abstract noun	widowhood
2	Liv. 34.7.12	viduitas and orbitas	abstract noun	no longer married
3	Liv. 40.4.2	viduitate	abstract noun	widowhood

Chapter IV: The Word *Vidua* in Roman Poetry From the 1st Century B.C.

This chapter focuses on the use and meaning of the word *vidua* in Roman poetry of the 1st century B.C. Before beginning our discussion of the word *vidua* a number of observations need to be made that pertain to its new and unique use in Roman poetry of the 1st century B.C. Up to this point we have only seen the word *vidua* as a feminine substantive adjective acting as a noun in a sentence.¹²⁷ This original use of word is expanded and modified by the Roman poets of the 1st B.C. who now primarily use the word as an adjective. Moreover the use is no longer limited to the feminine gender but also very often includes masculine and neuter forms such as *viduos*, *viduo*, *viduum* etc. The findings in Table IV demonstrate that out of the total twenty-six times that the word appears in all of Roman poetry of 1st B.C. it is used adjectivally twenty-three times and only 3 times as a substantive adjective, the primary use that we have seen up to this point in Roman comedy and prose. A further observation is that out of the twenty-three times that it is used adjectivally the word is found modifying inanimate objects such as furniture (*toro* and *cubili*), architectural spaces (*domo* and *aula*), vegetation (*vitis* and *arbores*) and various other things 18 times while only 5 times modifying groups of

¹²⁷ We do find the word *viduus* in Book II of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*. Although the precise context of the word is within a quoted and translated chunk of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Unbound*, that Cicero injects during a dialogue on the topic of the suffering, pain and wretchedness. The translation of the verses from Greek to Latin is Cicero's, therefore even though the word *viduus* is found in philosophical text written in prose its original (Greek) poetic context places into the realm of poetry. It is interesting to note that Cicero's choice of using the word *viduus* in his poetry correlates with its broader contemporary use in Roman poetry. Cic. *Tus. Dis.* 2.25.1. For identical use see Horace Od. 1.10, in both instances the adjective *viduus* carries the forces of a perfect passive participle. For orthographic and grammatical discussion see Bennett and Rolfe 1901, pg. 215. Similarly the word *viduus* found in Hor. Od. 1.10.11-12 technically used as an adjective going with the subject Apollo, although grammatically it has a participial force of *viduatus*, which could have been shortened for metrical reasons.

people, both female and male.¹²⁸ The eighteen times it is paired with inanimate objects, 8 of those are feminine adjectives, 7 are masculine and the remaining 3 are neuter. A discussion of this poetic, meaning adjectival, use of the word will make up the first part of the chapter, revealing the various metaphorical ways in which the poets employ the word and its meaning.¹²⁹ The second half of the chapter will focus on the three substantive uses of the word two of which are concentrated in the various books of Ovid's *Fasti* followed by the one instance in the first book of Horace's *Epistles*.

Adjectival use of the word *vidua* in Roman Poetry

The earliest adjectival use of the word *vidua* in Roman poetry of the 1st century B.C. is found in Catullus 6. Catullus in this seventeen-line 'epigram' tries to persuade his friend Flavius to talk about his *delicias* (darling) and more generally his sex-life, which to our surprise Catullus wishes to call to heaven in pleasant verse.¹³⁰ The poem is saturated with sexual activity that is implied throughout the poem by calling our attention to Syrian oils, a dented pillow on both sides, a rickety bed as well as erotic overtones made explicit by the graphic imagery of *latera ecfututa pandas*.¹³¹ Within this overtly sexualized poem we find the lines (Cat. 6 lines 6-7):

*Nam te non viduas iacere noctes
nequiquam tacitum cubile clamat*

(For the bed, in vain silent, shouts that
you don't lie down at sexless nights.)

¹²⁸ See pg. 42-43 for the discussion of *viduos viros*, Ov. *Ars* 1.101-2.

¹²⁹ Within the corpus of all Roman poetry of the 1st century B.C. there are also two instances of the word *viduata*, a perfect passive participle of *viduo*. Found in Verg. *G.* 4.518 and Lucr. *De Rerum Natura* 5.840.

¹³⁰ Cat. 6 lines 16-17, *ad caelum lepido vocare versu*.

¹³¹ Cat. 6. lines 8-13. See Miller 2005, 406 for the discussion of the phrase *latera ecfututa pandas* within a sexually explicit context.

D.F.S. Thomson in his commentary on Catullus notes that the sense of *viduas* is to be ‘without a mate’ or in other words a lack of a sexual partner.¹³² I would like to suggest that the emphasis of the word *viduas* goes beyond the deprivation of a partner to mean the deprivation of the sexual act itself, which of course can only be achieved with another person. Catullus uses the word *vidua* (sexless) *noctes* to draw a sharp contrast between what Fabius wants society to think his doing, spending his nights without sexual intercourse and his actual behavior, which is revealed by the elements mentioned above. An identical pairing of the words is found in Ovid *Ep.* 19.69 with the same emphasis on the lack of sexual activity. The letters are written between two mythological beloved figures who yearn for one another and ask themselves why it is that they spend so many “sexless” nights away from each.¹³³ The recurring theme yearning to be in each other’s physical presence hints at the desire to be lovers in the sexual sense of the word. The word *vidua*, which we have seen up to this point to mean the social category of no longer married women, according to Roman social norms were suppose to be sexually inactive as a result of being outside the institution of marriage. Only under the guise of marriage were proper Roman women allowed to have sexual intercourse due to cultural conditioning and the biological threat of conception. What we see here is Roman poets assimilating a traditional concept, meaning the association of deprived women as a social category deprived of sex, for their own poetical purpose and use.

A similar metaphorical meaning, of being without sex, is very commonly found

¹³² See Thomson 1998, 222. For other translations see E.L. Merrill 1893, 14 and R. Ellis 2010 15th ed., 20.

¹³³ Ov. *Ep.* 19.69, *cur ego tot viduas exegi frigida noctes?*

throughout Elegiac poetry.¹³⁴ Here the sexual overtones are made more explicit by pairing *viduo* with words such as *torus*, *cubile* and *lectus*, Latin variations for the English words bed, couch and more specifically marital bed. Out of the eighteen pairings of the words *vidua*, *viduus*, *viduum* with inanimate objects, nine of those are with *torus*, *cubile* and *lectus*. The frequent association between pieces of furniture that were used for procreation, marital sex and sexual liaisons outside of marriage, the most common in the genre of elegy and the word *viduo* which stands in opposition to those meanings because of its embedded connotations with a lack of sexual activity creates a sense of polarity and friction between the two implied concepts. In Ovid's *Amores* 2.10, the poet is troubled by the fact that he is in love with two beautiful. No matter how much he compares the two he sways like a ship caught in a storm.¹³⁵ Even though the poet is clearly in a state of emotional torment he declares it better than "*iacerem*" (lying) without *amore* at all.¹³⁶ In the following lines he wishes that "*hostibus eveniat viduo dormire cubili*" (it befall my enemies to sleep in a sexless bed).¹³⁷ The sexual thematic emphasis of the poem reaches its peak in lines 23-25 where the poet brags about his physical ability to satisfy both of the women as well as his wish to die during the act of Venus.¹³⁸ Therefore the highly erotic context of the poem illuminates the meaning of the word *viduo* as being directly connected with the lack of sexual activity in order to heighten the contrast between the misery that comes with sexual inactivity and the pleasure of sexual activity. In other

¹³⁴ For a full list see Table IV pg. 95.

¹³⁵ Ovid *Am.* 2.10.9-10.

¹³⁶ Ovid *Am.* 2.10.15.

¹³⁷ Ovid *Am.* 2.10.17.

¹³⁸ Ovid *Am.* 2.10.29.

words the enemies suffer and the poet rejoices.

The elegiac tradition of redirecting the focus of the word, on its 'sexlessness', is interestingly still working within the social conventions of its meaning and only being subversive by the actual act of placing a word that is not meant to be associated with sex in a sexual context. This observation can illuminate the meaning of elegiac poems that employ the word *viduo* as well as caution against the standardized translation to the English word widowed that in the end limits our understanding of the poems.¹³⁹ For example in Propertius 2.9 the word *viduo* is found in the context of a poem that chastises one of the poet's lovers for not being able to stay faithful for one night.¹⁴⁰ He contrasts the faithless woman with the exemplary actions of Penelope who for twenty years waited for Odysseus.¹⁴¹ Followed by the proper and noble deeds carried out by Briseis after the death of Achilles, described as one without his father Peleus, his mother Thetis and away from the Scyrian princess Deidamia who is in her *viduo toro* (sexless bed).¹⁴² W.A. Camps in his commentary on the poem suggests that the word *viduo* was suppose to make the audience think of the poor Deidamia who as a result of Achilles death as a widowed bride.¹⁴³ As previously stressed in my chapter on the use of the word *vidua* in prose in order for a woman to acquire a status of a *vidua* in Rome a process of transition

¹³⁹ The word *vidua* as stressed throughout the paper is not limited to the English word widow but contains it as one of its meanings. Further in poetry that meaning is expanded and played with by the poets with their clear reorientation on the aspect of being deprived of sex.

¹⁴⁰ Pro. 2.9.19-20.

¹⁴¹ Pro. 2.9.3-4. Recall the beginning of Plautus' *Stichus* where Penelope was described as a *vidua* as well as the two sisters whose husbands have been away for three years.

¹⁴² Pro. 2.9.15-16, *cum tibi nec Peleus aderat nec caerulea mater, Scyria nec viduo Deidamia toro*.

¹⁴³ See W.A. Camps 1967, 105.

between married and no longer married needs to occur. As it is well known to us and must have been to Propertius Achilles who during his stay in the palace of Lycomedes did not take Deidamia as his wife but as his lover, a physical relationship which resulted in a birth of a son. Therefore the real connection that the poet is making with the words *viduo toro* is one of extramarital behavior that took place in Deidamia's bed, an act of love that was not sanctioned by the institution of marriage. This interpretation of the line fits well into a poem that is full of sexual overtones from its very theme of venting about an ex-lover pursuing a new sexual endeavor to its very last line that reads "*ille vir in medio fiat amore lapis!*"¹⁴⁴

The highest concentration of the use the word *vidua/viduus/viduum* is found in Ovid's *Heroides*, a collection of fifteen 'letters' written by mythological heroines to their absent lovers and three double epistles between Helen and Paris, Leander and Hero and Acontius and Cydippe.¹⁴⁵ The nature of love letters as they are written to significant others during a period of separation as well the particular characters chosen by Ovid such Penelope and Odysseus, Dido and Aeneas, Hermione and Orestes who in their literary traditions are know to have undergone estrangement, make this the ideal environment for the use of the word *vidua*.¹⁴⁶ The word *vidua* emphasizes the heightened sense of drama in these already highly emotional letters. By using of *vidua* instead words that merely

¹⁴⁴ For a different reading of poem 2.9 see Bobrowski 1994. Translation from Katz 2004, 113 "that man may turn to stone while he's doing you!" Also see Katz 2012 pg. 244.

¹⁴⁵ See Introduction to Knox 1995 specifically pg. 6 for problems with including the double-letters in the collection described by Ovid in *Am* 2.18. The problems of genre and literary criticism cannot be fully addressed due to the limited scope of the paper.

¹⁴⁶ The act of letter writing itself denotes a physical distance between the writer and the recipient.

mean alone or empty we are able to illuminate a more comprehensive understanding of the characters status and a more nuanced sense of the intensity of their emotion. All of these factors call for a close reading of the passages within the individual letter that contain the word *vidua*.

Out of the twenty-six total instances of the word in Roman poetry ten of those, nearly half, are found in the *Heroides*. The use in all of these occurrences is adjectival describing inanimate objects and things except for the one instance in Ov. *Ep.* 8.86.¹⁴⁷ The actual context of the letters that is centered on the idea of being away from ones beloved and the frequent theme of abandonment aids at shifting the focus of the meaning *vidua* towards the bereavement of the people themselves specifically in the instances of spouses who are separated unwillingly. This general shift in focus on the act of being deprived of their significant others does not apply to the instance mentioned above in Ov.*Ep.*19.69 because the story of these particular lovers is based on the sexual act itself for which they yearn when apart. Therefore I would like to draw a distinction between marital love and sense of bereavement that is shared between spouses and the sense of deprivation that the lovers feel for the transient sexual act. Having made this distinction, the characters marital status in the Epistles changes the meaning and use of the word *vidua*. In order to differentiate the two, the adjective translated as deprived will retain its marital essence, in other words being deprived of their marital love, while bereft will be used for lovers and their loss.

In Epistle I of Ovid, written in the guise of Penelope to her husband Odysseus, we

¹⁴⁷ For a full list of citations see Table IV pg. 95.

encounter the word *vidua* twice. The first instance is as follows (Ov.*Ep.*1 lines 9-10):

*“nec mihi quaerenti spatiosam fallere noctem
lassaret viduas pendula tela manus.”*

(nor would the hanging warp constantly wear out my lonesome hands
a way I sought to elude the pro-longed nights.)

In the opening lines of the poem we find Penelope complaining about her fate of living without her husband as a result of the mischievous act of Paris whom Penelope wished to have perished at sea on his way to Sparta thus preventing his meeting with Helen, the war and her deprived state. The use of the word *viduas* here is meant to create an association not with Penelope as a widow, which from the context of the story we know she is not, but as a woman who is experiencing a long-term physical separation from her husband away on a mandatory military campaign, one the meanings of the word *vidua* we previously encountered in the opening lines of Plautus' *Stichus*.¹⁴⁸ Peter Knox points our attentions to a connection between weaving and unwanted chastity that is found in both Greek and Latin epigrams.¹⁴⁹ In this case the activity of weaving is standing in place of marital intercourse, which was the desired, *idealized*, way to spend nights as a married woman. The words *viduas manus* as a transferred epithet carries the meaning to Penelope in which case, through her own perception, she is a lonesome wife who feels deprived of the warm embrace of her husband that no other man can replace. Thus the word *vidua*

¹⁴⁸ The most common meaning of the word *vidua* is the broad category of women who are no longer married. If the context clarifies the reason for why the women are no longer married than we can apply the narrower subcategories such as divorcées, widows and abandoned women whose husbands have ran away with no intention of returning therefore dissolving their marriage. Another definition that can be added to the word is women who have been physically separated from their husbands for long periods of time because of mandatory obligations such as military draft or professional duties of maritime merchants and traders.

¹⁴⁹ Knox 1995, 91.

can be applied to women who under no will of their own or their husbands but as a result of external circumstances such as war and employment make it necessary for the wife and husband to be separated.¹⁵⁰ The marriage in this process of separation is not dissolved. Therefore the word *vidua* is used metaphorically here to allude to the aspects that come with bereavement such as loneliness, sadness, and a lack of physical relationship that Penelope along with many other women suffer during the time of war.¹⁵¹

In the second instance of the word, Penelope informs the audience that her father Icarius urges her to leave or even forsake her *viduo lecto* (deprived bed), constantly rebuking her for her endless delays to do so.¹⁵² The implication of these lines is clear. Icarius wished for Penelope to get remarried. Her father's pleas to take a new husband suggest a different meaning of the word *viduo*, one that we have seen most often in Livy, of no longer being married. By evoking a social institution of (re) marriage and by using *viduo lecto* as a transferred epithet to relocate the status of the word of no longer married to Penelope, Ovid reveals his own authorial and Roman view of Penelope as a Roman *vidua*. This status of being perceived as a no longer married woman Penelope is all but familiar with due to the endless number of suitors who fill her home and ask for her hand

¹⁵⁰ Of course in the case of Odysseus we know of other reasons for his pro-longed state of separation from his exemplary wife.

¹⁵¹ This metaphorical use can also be seen in Ovi. *Tr.* 5.5.48. In Cat. 62.49 and Hor. *Od.* 4.5.30 the word *vidua* is used in a 'marriage' metaphor between *vidua vitis* (lonesome vine) or *viduas arbores* (lonesome branches) that are married (joined) with one another so that the vine could grow tall and bare fruit. While the process of planting dormant grapevines requires a stake to be placed next to the vine in order for the shoot once it sprouts to wrap itself around it and grow upwards. For the discussion of passages see Thomas 2011 and Godwin 1995.

¹⁵² Ov. *Ep.* 1.81-82. *Me pater Icarius viduo discedere lecto cogit et immensas increpat usque moras.*

in marriage.¹⁵³ The irony of Penelope's endeavor of persuading Odysseus to come home by writing him a letter is that the only way he could read it if he came, since the letter has no way of finding its addressee rendering it futile.

The heroine Oenone who without much fame or happiness carries the burden of being Paris' first wife is the author of Epistle V. Oenone spends the begin of the letter reminding Paris of the love he used to feel for her and how he cried dreading their departure on his cursed trip to Sparta.¹⁵⁴ Oenone after recalling witnessing the arrival of the *Lacaenam* woman, Helen, warns Paris that his new bride will leave him as she did her rightful husband. She informs Paris that "*Ardet amore tui, sic et Menelaon amavit, nunc iacet in viduo credulus ille toro*" (She burns with your love, as she once loved Menelaus, he unsuspecting now lies there in a deprived bed).¹⁵⁵ Here it is interesting to point out that the meaning of no longer being married is connected to a male character, an association that till this point has been exclusive tied to women. This poetic manipulation of meaning and gender configuration is typical of elegiac poetry in which the *Heroides* are included. Menelaus, a hyper-masculine figure who is driven by anger and pride to restore his wife, is depicted here as a broken-hearted man laying down in ruins (*iacet*) on

¹⁵³ A few historical questions arise from our discussion of Penelope being view as a no longer due to her husbands long absence, how did ordinary women whose husbands didn't come home get reintroduced into the so-called 'marriage market' of their communities, was there a socially accepted time period that abandoned wives and women whose husbands have been gone for an abnormally long period of time expected to wait before remarrying? It would seem to me that most women from practical and financial necessity would want to remarry unless of course they had enough children to aid them. In order to begin to understand the lives of abandoned Roman women a series of comparative studies with other time periods and regions need to be conducted. The time of was not only leads to a large number of widows but also to women whose husbands never return for other reasons such as resettlement, starting new families etc. For related discussion see Evans 1991 and Rosenstein 2002.

¹⁵⁴ *Ov.Ep.5.43. Flesti discedens — hoc saltim parce negare!* Oenone's memory of their love is its only remnant.

¹⁵⁵ *Ov.Ep.5.105-106.*

his no longer married coach without his beloved wife.¹⁵⁶ The marital bed is deprived of its second key component meaning that it can no longer retain its marital function of producing legitimate children and therefore uphold its status. This characterization of Menelaus as a deprived spouse casts him into a role of an abandoned male figure, a category clearly no longer exclusive to females. Let us consider for a brief moment that this recasting of gender roles is a commentary and reflection of Ovid's own society where female figures were expanding their social roles and responsibilities. During Ovid's lifetime women began to be more commonly seen in public dedications both of epigraphical and iconographic nature.¹⁵⁷ Women's roles as mothers and wives were elevating and acquired a renewed social emphasis by Augustan moral legislature.¹⁵⁸ The fact that Ovid was able to make an association between a strictly female social category of *vidua* and a male figure by ascribing him with the same status of being deprived could suggest that women during this time had more opportunities to leave their husband, thus making them the objects of deprivation.¹⁵⁹ This phenomenon of using the word *viduo* with men is only found poetry and more precisely is limited to Ovid.

It is worth pointing out that the letter written by Menelaus daughter Hermione to Orestes, begging him to save her from her wretched marriage to Neoptolemus, calls upon the exemplary behavior of her own father who at once was in a strikingly similar

¹⁵⁶ For the more traditional representation of Menelaus see Ov.*Ep.*8.21.

¹⁵⁷ See Fejfer 2008 and Trimble 2011.

¹⁵⁸ See Langlands 2006, Bauman 1992, and Milnor 2005.

¹⁵⁹ In my future research I want to carry out a study that focuses on historical as well as literary figures who are known to have been widowers and the words that are used to describe them. A similar study of contextualizing all the instances of the word *caeleps* is also necessary. For further discussion of the *viduos* and *viduum* describing Greek and Roman men see Ov.*Ep.*8.86 and Ov. *Ars.* 1.101-102.

situation. She states that if Orestes' father-in-law spent his time crying in his *vidua aula* (deprived palace), her mother would still be married to Paris, as she once was.¹⁶⁰ Here the focus is not on the emotional state of Menelaus or his newly acquired status as a no longer married man but on the brute force and swift agency the king employs to get Helen back, traits much more commonly associated with male literary figures.¹⁶¹ These two opposing representations of Menelaus highlight the importance of the letter's rhetorical aims, which affected the content as well characterization of people.¹⁶²

The ninth epistle is written in the hand of Deianira to her husband Hercules. The letter begins with Deianira remembering her married years as being spent in a *vidua doma*, deprived and lonesome house, and to a man who was closer to a *hostes* (guest) than a husband.¹⁶³ Ovid's choice to use the word *vidua* when talking about Deianira's neglected state by her constantly traveling husband not only heightens the sense of the loneliness and despair that the wife must feel having to always be alone in her house but more importantly foreshadows in this instance the actual widowhood that Deianira brings upon herself. Towards the very end of the poem Deianira mentions a letter that informed her of her husband's death from the poison in his famous lion skin tunic. Deianira who believed the poison to be a love potion that would stop Hercules from cheating on her,

¹⁶⁰ Ov.Ep.8.21-22. *Si socer ignavus vidua stertisset in aula, Nupta foret Paridi mater, ut ante fuit.* Hermione compares their situation to her parents also in Ov.Ep.2.41.

¹⁶¹ Note that the next lines talk about the scale of Menelaus effort to bring his wife back to her proper husband.

¹⁶² See Knox 1995, Lindheim 2003, and Hagedorn 2004.

¹⁶³ Ov.Ep.9.33 and Ov.Ep.9.35, *Ipsa vidua votis operata pudicis.*

drenching the lion-skin in it ended up killing him.¹⁶⁴ This revelation as well as her contemplations of ending her life turns this letter into a confession and a suicide note. This context of death makes the meaning of the word *vidua* be narrowed to its definition of being a widow, which is the exact status of Deianira as she is writing this letter. Thus the lonesome and deprived state of the house during the time of her marriage is transferred in meaning to the widowed state of Deianira after the death of her husband. This passage provides a perfect example of the diversity and depth of meaning that is encompassed in the word *vidua*.

A similar use of the *vidua* coincidentally also paired with the word *domo* is found in Book I of Ovid's *Fasti*. Ovid informs us that Romulus reasoned the length of a year to correspond with how long it takes a child to emerge from a mother's womb.¹⁶⁵ The Romans generally thought that a woman's pregnancy lasted nine or ten months. Ovid then informs us that (Fas.1.35-36):

*Per totidem menses a funere coniugis uxor
sustinet in vidua tristia signa domo.*

For just so many months after her husband's funeral
a wife supports the signs of sorrow in her widowed house.¹⁶⁶

The temporal phrase *per totidem menses*, is referring to the period of ten months that was established in the verses above. The context of death is made explicit by the reference to the husband's funeral (*funere coniugis*). Therefore a woman who lost her husband was

¹⁶⁴ Ov.Ep.9.143.

¹⁶⁵ See Green 2004, 47-48. Green writes "Ovid is, however, the first to suggest that Romulus may have based his ten-month calendar on this natural measurement of time" pg. 48. Ov. *Fas*.1.27-34.

¹⁶⁶ Translation from Frazer 1929, 5.

supposed to stay in mourning for the period of ten months.¹⁶⁷ The exact *signa* of mourning some scholars speculate to be practices such as wearing dark garments as well as living a secluded life, with restricted visit only to her mother-in-law's house.¹⁶⁸ The context of mourning and death narrows the definition of *vidua* to widowed, which is not only describing the house but also the *uxor*, who now belongs in the category of Roman women who are no longer married.

An interesting question arises from the way Ovid chose to describe the woman as an *uxor*, even though he was clearly referring to a period after the death and funeral of her husband, which in our modern conception would make the woman a widow.¹⁶⁹ Why then did Ovid still use the word *uxor* to describe the woman?¹⁷⁰ The one explanation for this passage can be sought in the minds of the Romans. The reason why the Romans of the 1st B.C. don't call women who have been widowed widows is because the Romans didn't conceptualize of widowhood within the same temporal boundaries. In other words the Romans did not perceive wives as widows at the time of their husband's death since the mourning period was viewed as a pseudo-continuation of that marital relationship.

¹⁶⁷ From non-Republican sources we learn that a period of ten months was also the time period a widow was to wait before remarrying. The context of this passage does not explicitly state that widows were not allowed to remarry during these ten months, although Green assumes that this limitation is implied here. Ovid restates the period of lamentation as a year (ten months) in *Ov. Fas.* 3.134. The line states that sad *femina* (women) were to mourn their men for ten month. In this case also, there is no direct mention of this mourning period being a waiting period in between marriages. This seems to suggest that the tradition of mourning came before the restriction on remarriage, which must have adopted the ten months model for its convenience and common sense. Since the ten months waiting period before remarrying was most likely implemented to establish a clear paternal line of the child for inheritance purposes.

¹⁶⁸ See Frazer 1929 Vol. II, 30-32. For ancient sources see *Cic. Clu.* 35, *Dion. Hal.* 8.62.2, *Liv.* ii. 7.4.

¹⁶⁹ In Book III line 134 Ovid refers to this exact period of mourning but using an even broader term of *femina* instead of *uxor* or *viduae*.

¹⁷⁰ A metonymy that develops over time.

Mourning the loss was the last obligation that a Roman wife held towards her husband and until that period of time was over she was still an *uxor* carrying out her marital duties.¹⁷¹ After that period of time the woman acquired the much broader status of a *vidua*, although factors such as remarriage might not have allowed for that social status to become prevalent and well established in the social conscience.¹⁷² The more literary explanation is *variatio*, where if Ovid chose to use the word *vidua* for the woman he would no longer be able to use the same type of word to describe the *domo*. This would also suggest that the word *domo* in this case has a sense of a household rather than merely of a house. For the death of a *pater familias*, the head of the household had an effect not only on the *uxor* but on the whole household.

Let us now return to the discussion of the word in the *Heroides*. The tenth epistle narrates the miserable condition of Ariadne immediately after she finds herself abandoned by Theseus. The visualization of the moment in which Ariadne realizes her plight and Theseus' betrayal is a crescendo of emotions that originate in Ariadne's still sleeping state. The episode begins with Ariadne, who is having a nightmare, reaching for the comfort of her beloved she fails to find him; in her second attempt to find Theseus with her hand searching his whole side of the bed also proves useless.¹⁷³ Then this (Ov.*Ep.*10.13-14):

¹⁷¹ If more Republican inscriptions existed a worthwhile endeavor would be to see how often, if at all, dedicatees of lost husbands would address themselves as *vidua*. A study that I would want to carry out in the future for the inscriptions of the Roman Empire in a historical study of women who we know from ancient sources to have been actual widows.

¹⁷² In the case of elder widows (*vidua*) the fast approaching death might have also played a role in preventing the social category from becoming firmly established in the social conscience. It is important to keep in mind that ideally widowhood was not expected to last for a long period of time in Roman culture.

¹⁷³ Ov.*Ep.*10.9-12.

*Excussere metus somnum; conterrita surgo,
Membraque sunt viduo praecipitata toro.*

Fear shook off sleep; completely terrified I stood up,
my limbs were thrown from the deprived bed.

These two lines paint a vivid image of Ariadne's mental state as being stricken with intense dread and fear of not being able to find her promised spouse. After she left the bed, standing on her feet, her eyes confirmed the dreadful truth. The ships were gone and so was her husband to be. The reason why Ariadne was put in that position in the first place is because of Theseus' promise to make her his wife after she helped him kill her brother the Minotaur. This promise has not yet been fulfilled as the couple was not yet married thus finding Ariadne searching for Theseus in the same bed implies that they have engaged in the physical aspects of marriage which would make the separation that much harder and shocking for the princess.¹⁷⁴ Therefore by using the word *viduo* to describe the bed, Ovid is foreshadowing Ariadne's condition and state as a deprived woman.¹⁷⁵ The sexual relationship between the two must have reinforced the illusion of being married for Ariadne since women especially of her social standing were only conditioned to have marital intercourse. Therefore Ariadne who in 'reality' was not married could still qualify as a *vidua* due to her own construct of the relationship she had with Theseus, the promise of a marriage seemed fulfilled with the act of love-making and reaffirmed through the process of sharing a 'marital' bed.

¹⁷⁴ The act of making love might have been perceived by Ariadne as the actual consummation of marriage, which draws similar parallels with the mindset of Dido.

¹⁷⁵ See Knox 1995 pg. 237 who suggest the narrower translation of *viduo* as widowed. As I have tried to show, Ariadne fits into the broader social category of deprived women as her "husband" Theseus does not die.

The last two instances of the word *viduo* are found in consecutive lines of epistle XVI. This is the first letter in a series of three written by a male character, in this case Paris. The predominant tone of the letter is one of passion, lust and sex as well as Paris' conviction of making Helen his wife. The obstacle that stands in the way of his desire is Helen's marriage to Menelaus. It is interesting to note that Paris no longer sees his own marriage to Oenone as an obstacle since he has left the community where the two were married, while Helen still needs to be convinced to abandon her Spartan husband.¹⁷⁶ The concern of making Helen his wife is not the only thing on Paris' mind. Paris addresses these lines to his beloved (Ov.Ep.16.317-320):

*Sola iaces viduo tam longa nocte cubili
In viduo iaceo solus et ipse toro.
Te mihi meque tibi communia gaudia iungant
Candidior medio nox erit illa die.*

You lie alone in your sexless bed, all the night long
I too lie alone on my sexless couch.
Let's join in communal delights, you with me and I with you
Midnight will be brighter than the day.

The first two lines are balanced by the repeated use of the word *viduo*, the objects that they modify (*toro* and *cubili*) and the repetition of the word *solus* and the verb *iaceo*.¹⁷⁷

This mirroring is meant to create an illusion of the two lovers sharing an identical fate and their necessity to be with one another so that they no longer spend their nights

¹⁷⁶ This conception or rationalization of marriage points to the fact that marriage was a localized institution that was first and foremost recognized by the community then the law, especially in the early years of the Roman Republic.

¹⁷⁷ The verb *iaceo* is also commonly found in the context of *viduo toro*, *lecto* and *cubili*. See Pro. 6. 6, Ov. Am. 2.10.17,

alone.¹⁷⁸ The type of intimacy that Paris is seeking in this passage is sexual. The erotic overtones are prevalent throughout the 4 lines. The phrase *tam longa nocte* adds a temporal element that insinuates promiscuous behavior in Roman culture. Further the suggestion of line 319 is for the two lovers to join in their mutual *gaudia*, delights, in other words Paris' desire to share a bed with Helen. The elegiac poets commonly use the word *gaudia* as a sexual euphemism for an orgasm, a physical consequence of the togetherness that Paris is implying.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore as we have previously seen the word *viduo* in a sexualized context also symbolize a lack of a sexual act, which are all demonstrated in Table IV. Here the sexless state of the beds is transferred to the lovers who in their own separate beds cannot enjoy the delights of sex. Even if we are to assume that Paris is referring to the act of marriage by the verb *iungo* the focus is on the benefits or the delights that marriage brings, in this case meaning the ability to sleep with one another.

This brings us to our discussion of the three instances where the words *vidua* and *viduum* in Roman poetry are describing individuals and groups of females and males. This use is far less common, a total of 5, in comparison to the eighteen times the adjective was used to describe inanimate things. Three of these occurrences are found in Ovid, one in the *Ars Amatoria*, which we discussed above, the second in the *Heriodes*

¹⁷⁸ The logic laid out by Paris is overly simple, just because two people are alone doesn't mean that they ought to be together or married to one another.

¹⁷⁹ For a discussion of sexual euphemism in Roman elegy see Maltby 1993. More specifically for the word *gaudia* see Miller 2002, 147 and Adams 1990, 181 and 197-8. See Tib. 1.5.39-40 and Lucr. 4.1106.

and the third in Book II of the *Fasti*.¹⁸⁰ The eighth epistle is composed in the voice of Hermione who, we previously saw urging her beloved Orestes to act with the same resolution, as once did her father Menelaus in restoring his ‘stolen’ wife. In her further implorations to Orestes Hermione utter these lines (Ov.Ep.8.85-86):

*Nec quondam placuit nec nunc placuisset Achilli
Abducta viduum coniuge flere virum.*

It was neither formerly pleasing to Achilles, nor would it have pleased him now,
that a deprived husband should cry for the abduction of his spouse.

The early context of the lines informs us that if Achilles weren’t taken by Apollo’s arrow, he would condemn the actions of his son Neoptolemus, who against Hermione’s will made her his wife, promised first to Orestes. This situation brings to mind the conflict that arose between Achilles, his ‘wife’ Briseis and Agamemnon who *abducit* the bride for himself. The words *viduum virum* are describing the state of Achilles after his wife was taken from him, making him a deprived husband. The abduction is the cause of their separation not death. Therefore *viduum* does not need to have a sense of being widowed instead the category is broadened to mean a man whose wife has been taken from him by force. On the one hand this new nuanced meaning of the word *viduum* is specific to its literary context but on the other we can still see its foundation in the social meaning of the word. In other words men and woman in similar positions of abandonment would fall into the social category of *vidua/viduus*. The purpose of uttering these lines is the same as we saw in Ov.Ep.8.21, Hermione uses the implied actions of Achilles, her current father-in-law, who went as far as refusing to fight in the Trojan War and ordered to withdraw

¹⁸⁰ For a discussion of Ov.Ars.1.101-102 see pg. 41-43.

his troops from the army to secure the return of his wife, to insinuate to Orestes his need to imitate the examples of determination and commitment set by her father and father-in-law.

The one instance of the word *vidua* used as an adjective describing a group of females outside of Ovid's corpus is found in Propertius' second book.¹⁸¹ Poem 2.33a opens with the poet reproaching the ten days of abstinence that have been imposed on Cynthia by the Isiac rites.¹⁸² This obligation to the goddess Isis meant an involuntary separation of the lovers, a heavy burden to bear inspiring much lamentation and criticism of the goddess Isis herself.¹⁸³ The strength of the poet's indignation is marked by three consecutive questions that end in a threat of expelling the goddess from the city of Rome.¹⁸⁴ The first two questions ask the goddess why the dark disciples of Egypt weren't enough for her and why she chose to travel to the city of Rome. The third question is "*quidue tibi prodest viduas dormire puellas?*" (What does it profit you that/How is it profitable to you that deprived/sexless girls sleep?)¹⁸⁵ This last interrogation is in direct dialogue with line 5, which claimed that the goddess was responsible for often separating *cupidos amantes* (passionate lovers). The meaning of the word *viduas* becomes illuminated by the overarching theme of the poem, which is the poet's physical separation from his lover, and ultimately their inability to have sexual intercourse. Here as in Pro.

¹⁸¹ Pro. 2.33a.17.

¹⁸² Propertius described the rites as *tristia sollemnia*. This imposition is a common complain among the elegist see Tib. 1.3.29-32, Ov. *Am.* 1.8.73-4, 2.13.17.

¹⁸³ See Miller 1992.

¹⁸⁴ Pro. 2.33a15-20.

¹⁸⁵ See Woodcock 1959, 169. Section 211: *Impersonal verbs and expressions with the dative of the person concerned*.

2.9 the sexual explicitness is saved until the very last line, *ter faciamur iter*.¹⁸⁶ Although it is clear from the beginning that the real reason for the poet's anger is his inability to have sex with Cynthia. Furthermore the first thing that he asks of Cynthia after the ten days are over is exactly that.¹⁸⁷ Therefore *viduas puellas*, which on the surface translates as deprived girls, here means the sexless nature of their state that has been imposed upon them by the rites of Isis.¹⁸⁸ The thing of which the girls are deprived of is the same thing of which the poet is complaining to be deprived of, sex. The reason why the word *vidua* is used is to direct the reader's attention to the thing of which the girl are deprived which in this case is clearly sexual intercourse. Thus the deprived girls are sexless girls both meanings interchangeable.

The theme of religious restrictions on Roman social practices carries over into our discussion of Book II of Ovid's *Fasti*. Further this provides a perfect transition into the second half of the chapter that focuses on the substantive use of the word *vidua*. In this first instance the word *viduae* in a strict grammatical sense is being used adjectively with *puellae*. The reason for the inclusion of the word *puellae* instead of simply using the word *viduae* as a substantive adjective is metrical. In order for Ovid to fit the meter he needed to lengthen the line. The elegiac couplet reads (Ov.F.2.557-558):

*Dum tamen haec fiunt, viduae cessate puellae:
expectet puros pinea taeda die.*

¹⁸⁶ Pro. 2.33a.22. Translation from Katz 2004, 219 "Let's do it three time in a row."

¹⁸⁷ Pro. 2.33a.22.

¹⁸⁸ The word *viduas* is not used to mean deprived girls in the sense of no longer being married as is the case in the substantive adjective use we saw in Roman prose. Here the deprived girls are in a position of not being able to have intercourse with their lovers. The deprivation is focus on the sexual act itself rather than the lover due to the nature of the whole poem that emphasized sex over love and the physical relationship over the lover herself.

But while the rites are being performed, no longer married girls refrain/cease from!
Let the nuptial pine torch wait till the days are pure.¹⁸⁹

The couplet informs us of one of the restrictions that was implemented during the period of the Parentalia, the prohibition to marry.¹⁹⁰ The *viduae puellae* as pointed out first by Frazer is referring to women who are remarrying in other words women that have been previously married.¹⁹¹ In his translation of the word *viduae*, Frazer only includes Roman widows, where as I want to suggest that *viduae* here means the broader category of no longer married women that includes women that lost their husbands not only to death, but divorce and abandonment. Further evidence in support of my claim that the word *vidua* does not include never or not yet married women is found in the subsequent two lines that informs us of a peculiar marriage rite that is unique to *virgineas* or woman who are marrying for the first time.¹⁹² The ritual involved the hair of the bride being combed with a spear known as the *hasta caelibaris*.¹⁹³ This clear distinction between never married and previously married women warns against the broad translation of the word *vidua* as unmarried, which includes both categories of women that the Romans saw as distinct.¹⁹⁴

Substantive use of the word *vidua* in Roman Poetry

The first true instance of the word *vidua* as a substantive adjective in Roman poetry

¹⁸⁹ The translation of line 558 is from Frazer 1929, 88.

¹⁹⁰ The second restriction was the closure of the temples, Ov. *Fas.* 2.563-4. The *Parentalia* was the feast of the dead.

¹⁹¹ See Frazer 1929 Vol. II, 438 and Robinson 2011, 348-349. Also for the use of the word *puellae* to mean married women see Ovid. *Fas.* 2.445, 451, 810.

¹⁹² Frazer was the first one to point out this contrast between *viduae* as the remarrying group and *virgineas* as the ones to get married for the first time.

¹⁹³ According to Festus the spear was struck in the body of a defeated gladiator.

¹⁹⁴ According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary the word unmarried includes not now or previously married, being divorced and widowed.

is found in Book III of Ovid's *Fasti*. Unlike in the passage above where the word *viduae* was an adjective here it is syntactically acting as a noun in the sentence.¹⁹⁵ The word *viduae* is once again found within a familiar narrative of the Sabine women this time recited through the eyes of Mars himself. Ovid informs us that abduction of the Sabine women at the festival of Consus lead to a first-time war between in-laws.¹⁹⁶ The war continued even after the women became mothers, husbands fathers and fathers-in-law grandfathers. The women in an effort to end the war assembled in the temple of Juno, where the wife of Romulus, speaking on the behalf of all the women declares their inability to ignore their familial and patriotic duty.¹⁹⁷ With the battle lines having been drawn up, Romulus' wife postulates a question to the women (Ov. Fas.3.211):

Quaerendum est, viduae fieri malitis an orbae

The question is, whether you prefer to be widows or orphans.¹⁹⁸

This same contrast between becoming widows or orphans is made by Livy in 1. 13. 9-13. The context of war and battle as well as its similarity to Livy's passage reveals the meaning of the word *viduae* as widows, since the condition under which the women are placed would result in either the deaths of their husbands, fathers or both. The women who implicitly, in Ovid's narrative, choose death to either of those which can be deduced from their decision to place themselves directly in the middle of the battlefield. The

¹⁹⁵ Although as I pointed out its actual meaning and implied use is substantive.

¹⁹⁶ Ov.Fas.3.202. See Frazer 1929 Vol. III, 57 for a political reading of this line.

¹⁹⁷ Ovid does not provide a name for Romulus' wife simply refers to her as "my (Mars) son's wife" in line 206. Dionysius of Halicarnassus refers to her the woman by the name of Hersilia but not label her as the wife of Romulus. Ovid in the *Metamorph.* xiv. 801 accepts the tradition of Romulus' wife name being Hersilia.

¹⁹⁸ The translation of line 211 is from Frazer 1929, 128.

women are not the only focus of Ovid's narrative. Unlike in Livy's account where the women remind the men of their children and grandchildren by speaking of them, the women in Ovid physically bring their children into the battlefield. It is the physical presence of the children that played a decisive role in the reconciliation of the war since it was their cries that finally broke down the men's desire for battle and filled their hearts with paternal compassion. The inclusion of both sides of the family meaning fathers and husbands highlights the incorporation of the wives' families into Roman society. Therefore the Sabine men are no longer described as such but have acquired a new Roman familial title of grandfathers and *soceri* (father-in-laws) solidifying their integration into the Roman community. Ultimately the Sabine women are displaying traditional Roman virtues of *pietas*, an ideal unit of Roman family relations, self-sacrifice for the good of the state, and even *virtus* by stepping into the military sphere to procure the end of war and ultimately the survival of Rome.¹⁹⁹

The second and last occurrence of the substantive use of the word *vidua* in Ovid's *Fasti* is in Book V. The passage is found at the very end of Ovid's discussion of the festival of the Lemuria, which was held on the 9th, 11th and 13th of May to appease the spirits of the dead.²⁰⁰ In concluding his discussion of the Lemuria, Ovid reiterates two restrictions that were implemented during the periods sacred to the dead. The first is the shutting of the temples in order to prevent the spirits from entering and the second being

¹⁹⁹ The use of the word *vidua* in this mythological context unfortunately does not reveal anything about Roman widows although it does tell us what the Roman people valued.

²⁰⁰ See Frazer 1929 Vol. IV, 36. Ovid defines *lemures* in line 483 as the "souls of the silent ones" meaning of the dead. The belief was that on these days the souls of the dead would revisit the world of the living and go back into their old homes.

the ban on marriages.²⁰¹ The restriction against marriage on these days is strengthened by a threat of death (Ov.Fas.5.486-7):

nec viduae taedis eadem nec virginis apta
tempora: quae nupsit, non diuturna fuit.

The same season was neither suitable for no longer married women nor never married women:
She who did marry, would not live for a long time.

The superstition that a woman who married during this time would soon be taken by death on the one hand reveals the gravitas of the restriction to marry while on the other hand demonstrates a clear connection between the festival which was focused on appeasing the dead and the consequence of death if you were to disobey this religious (cultural) stipulation.²⁰² Here as in Ovid 2.557 the restriction is made explicit for both first time marriages and remarriages, which clearly makes an acknowledgment of two different social categories of women.²⁰³ Although the context does not narrow the definition of the word *vidua* to just widows but instead includes all women who qualify for remarriage including divorcées, abandoned women and women whose husbands have been missing for a long period of time.

Why did the Romans see it as necessary to make this distinction, of previously

²⁰¹ Ovid is referring here to the closing of the temples and marriage restriction implemented also during the *Parentalia*. More specifically the phrase *ferali tempore* alludes to the Feralia in February see Ov. *Fas.* 2.563-566. See Balsdon 1962, 180-1 for a useful summary of all the days that the Romans perceived as inauspicious for weddings.

²⁰² Frazer also suggests that the reason why the Romans regarded this time as bad for marriages is the Roman fear of wandering ghosts. See Frazer 1929, 53. For a different explanation see Rose 1924, *The Roman Questions of Plutarch*, 204.

²⁰³ It is interesting to postulate whether older never married women stayed in the category of *virgines* or acquired a specific category of their own. My feeling is that they remained in the *virgines* category because the Roman seemed to place more emphasis on a woman's marital status rather than her age. As well as the social reality of delayed marriages for certain women, meaning marrying outside the ideal first age of marriage which for women in Ancient Rome was late teens to early twenties, see Shaw 1987.

married and never married women, within the broader category of unmarried women in Roman society? This question cannot be fully answered due to the limitations of this project but a few speculations can be briefly made. The one reason for the distinction is the different marriage rituals that were required for these distinguished types of marriages. For example a woman who was previously married and bore children might not have to require the same fertility rituals as a first time bride whose fertility has not yet been guaranteed. Further a woman's status in Republican Roman society seems to be much more connected to her marital status, in other words since women at this time had fewer social roles to play their social status was primarily attached to their marital state. Respectable women's inability to have careers and professions limited their status to their marital and familial sphere. Here of course I am talking about specific kinds of Roman woman that fell into a certain social and economic 'class' in the Republic period, the elite and the wealthy.²⁰⁴ Although it is important to point out that the marriage restrictions mentioned by Ovid apply to all women that held Roman citizenship rich or poor, elite or non-elite. The identification of women as married, no longer married or never been married is not restricted to certain Roman classes but it is actually the elite and wealthy women who are limited to this element of social status.²⁰⁵

The final instance of the substantive use of the word *vidua*, which will also

²⁰⁴ The picture also begins to change with freedwomen and the emerging 'middle class' Roman women of the early Roman Empire that include their female professions on tombstones broadening a women's social identity and the elements which make up her status in Roman society.

²⁰⁵ Republican Roman women who were forced to work because of their economic standing could acquire a more complex social identity that would become intermixed with their marital and familial status. For example a woman from this social sphere could be a wife, a mother and a mid-wife. Therefore her community would recognize all those elements of her identity.

conclude this chapter, is found in Horace's *Epistles*. After illustrating the prevalence of materialism and its vices, the poet refuses to conform to the public's behavior and opinions. In his defense he postulates a question to the *populous Romanus*, what behavior should he follow or whom?²⁰⁶ The examples of popular 'professions' that he provides are all aimed at wealth and capital profit. He claims that some Roman men are eager for public contracts, while (Hor.Ep.1.1.77-79):

*sunt qui crustis et pomis viduas venentur avaras
excipiantque senes, quos in vivaria mittant*

others hunt greedy no longer married women with cakes and fruits
or catch old men, who are put into fishponds.

The first men to whom Horace was referring are the *publicani* who bid on public contracts for tax collecting, public building projects other state works.²⁰⁷ The second type of men described by Horace were known as the *captatores* or legacy hunters, who either were looking to marry the *viduae* or benefit from being included in their will after their deaths. The *captatores* are also found often in literary sources seeking out relationships with *orbi* or *orbae* (childless men or women) in the hope of obtaining the inheritance or being included in the will for some share of the profit. This particular passage by using the word *viduas* is referring to a broader social category of all types of women who are no longer married instead of only widows.²⁰⁸ The passage also creates a direct association

²⁰⁶ Hor. Ep.1.1.76.

²⁰⁷ Building of roads, public buildings such as grain storage facilities, shipyards, roads and harbors.

²⁰⁸ Shuckburgh 1956, 53 argues that the word *vidua* here "applied to any women without a legal protector either from having lost or never having had one and being deprived of natural protector as a father or a brother." This definition cannot be so on the basis that all women were assigned guardians even no longer married women had legal guardians, the extent of their actual power over the women is a different matter.

with the *pro Caecina*, where Cicero was indirectly accusing Aebitius of being a *captator* by calling him a flatter of women and protector of *viduae*.²⁰⁹ The reason for the trial in the first place was a result of Aebitius being included in the will of Caesennia, who was in dispute over the inheritance with Caesennia's second husband Caecina.

The word *avaras* that is describing the *viduas* is meant to represent the wealth of the women. The reason why Horace chose to use a clearly pejorative term to describe the rich *vidua* is due to the overarching criticism of money, material good, and the ambition to make money embedded in the epistle. The word *avaras* could also be suggestive of the way those women became rich and their innate desire for money which lead them to accumulate wealth by morally unsound ways such as charging high interest rates. The *viduas* are not the only susceptible targets for the legacy hunters, old men were perceived to be vulnerable to such 'scams' as well. The emphasis on old age of the men could suggest that *captatores* were after their inheritance while in the case of the *viduas* who are not associated with a specific age group were targets of single men hoping to marry a no longer married women. If this is the case it could imply that no longer married women were perceived as easier to marry than never married women that were more selective of their spouses due to the living state of their fathers. Therefore since the suitors did not have to win the approval of both the women and their fathers, it was perceived as a simpler pursuit. This reading would of course necessitate an older age group for the *viduae* in order to account for their independence from their fathers (their father's death),

Further never married women are never included in the definition of the word *vidua* and should not be considered to be so here. Mayer 2012, 104 includes widows, divorces and unmarried women.

²⁰⁹ For the discussion of the *Pro Caecina* see pg. 35-37.

although it is safe to assume that their were far more older no longer married women than young especially since young age made it easier to remarry. This passage in turn returns as to the first stereotype that we encounter of deprived women, the so-called easily manipulated or susceptible to treachery *vidua* in our discussion of Roman comedy.²¹⁰ The reason why this stereotype exists in Roman society is perfectly explained by Horace's first epistle, human vices of greed and desire for money lead people to accumulate and conversely to manipulate.

²¹⁰ This stereotype applies to all no longer married women not just widows.

Table IV: Instances of *Vidua* in the 1st Century B.C. Roman Poetry

	Context	Form	Part of Speech	Meaning
1	Catul. 6.6	viduas noctes	adjective (f.)	sexless nights
2	Catul. 62.49	vidua vitis	adjective (f.)	lonesome vine
3	Hor. Od. 1.10.11-12	viduus Apollo	adj. w/ participial force (m.)	A. laughed to find himself bereft
4	Hor. Od. 4.5.30	viduas arbores	adjective (f.)	lonesome branches
5	Hor. Ep. 1.1.78	viduas avaras	substantive adjective (f.)	greedy no longer married women
6	Ov. Am. 2.10.17	viduo cubili	adjective (n.)	sexless bed
7	Ov. Am. 3.5.42	viduo toro.	adjective (m.)	sexless bed
8	Ov. Am. 3.10.18	viduum pectus amoris	adj. w. gen. (n.)	heart bereft of love
9	Ovi. Tr. 5.5.48	uiduo toro	adjective (m.)	lonesome bed
10	Ovi. Fast. 1.36	vidua domo	adjective (f.)	widowed house
11	Ov. Fast. 2.557	viduae puellae	adjective (f.) sub. sense	no longer married girls
12	Ov. Fast. 3.211	viduae an orbae	substantive adjective (f.)	widows or orphans
13	Ov. Fast. 5.487	viduae nec virginis	substantive adjective (f.)	No longer married nor never married women
14	Ov. Ep. 1.10	viduas manus.	adjective (f.)	lonesome
15	Ov. Ep. 1.81	viduo lecto	adjective (m.)	deprived bed
16	Ov. Ep. 5.106	viduo toro	adjective (m.)	deprived bed
17	Ov. Ep. 8.21	vidua aula	adjective (f.)	deprived palace
18	Ov. Ep. 8.86	viduum virum	adjective (m.)	deprived husband
19	Ov. Ep. 9.35	vidua domo	adjective (f.)	deprived and widowed house
20	Ov. Ep. 10.14	viduo toro	adjective (m.)	deprived bed
21	Ov. Ep. 16. 317	viduo cubili	adjective (n.)	sexless bed
22	Ovi. Ep. 16. 318	viduo toro.	adjective (m.)	sexless bed
23	Ovi. Ep. 19.69	viduas noctes	adjective (f.)	sexless nights
24	Ovi. Ars 1.101-2	viduos viros	adjective (m.)	sexless men (wifeless)
25	Prop. 2.9.16	viduo toro	adjective (m.)	sexless bed
26	Prop. 2.33a.17	viduas puellas	adjective (f.)	deprived/sexless girls

Table V: Instances of Vidua in the 1st Century B.C. Roman Philosophy

	Context	Form	Part of Speech	Meaning
1	Cic. Rep. 2.36	orborum et viduarum	substantive adjective (noun)	no longer married women
2	Cic. Tusc. 2.25	viduus	perfect passive participle	bereft of myself, unable to help myself, deprived of myself, 'powerless'

Chapter V: Conclusion

The type of in-depths analysis carried out in this paper illuminates the complexity and the layers of meanings that are embedded in the term *vidua*. Furthermore this survey of the word *vidua* has been able to identify uses that are specific to certain genres such as the exclusive substantive adjective (noun) usage in Roman prose of the 1st century B.C. and an adjectival and metaphorical uses prevalent throughout Roman elegy. The nature of this case study allowed me to expand the Latin definition of *vidua* to include all no longer married women and to warrant against translating the term exclusively with the narrow modern widow. As I have argued throughout the paper, the specific subcategory of the no longer married group only comes to light from the explicit nature of the content of the passage in literary sources.

This thorough analysis of *vidua* and its various contexts shows that the primary function of the word in Roman society was to identify the marital status of Roman women as no longer married. This function of the word as a social marker corresponds with the three main marital statuses by which women in ancient Rome were identified: married, no yet or never married and no longer married. The various subcategories that are encapsulated in this social category and marital status can be alluded to through explicit content such as the discussion of the process of divorce, a direct reference to a husband's death or a prolonged physical separation that undermines the basis of a Roman marriage. To assign one of our modern specific marital statuses to the Latin word *vidua* results in obscuring the term's primary social role of identifying all no longer married women. The lack of specific ancient terms for various modern marital statuses suggests

that the Romans used *vidua* to mean all of the various subcategories of no longer married women such as: widows, divorcées, abandoned women as well as women who have been separated from their husbands due to prolonged absence whether because of military or economic responsibilities; and the specific meanings that were derived directly from the literary context.

The direct link between *vidua* and marital status is reaffirmed by the common context of marriage in which the word appears in the literary sources. More specifically the word *vidua* itself is a signifier of a woman's ability to marry again or remarry. This emphasis on the woman's reintroduction into the marriage-market is lost with the translation of *vidua* to the broad term unmarried, which not only includes not yet married women into its category but also does not make the necessary distinction between previously married and women marrying for the first time (clearly conveyed by the term *vidua*). The literary sources of the last two centuries B.C. support, as the study has shown, the claim that the definition of the word *vidua* at this time does not include never married women for whom the specific term of *virgines* was used.

It thus is safe to conclude that the word *vidua* provided Roman women with a status that displayed their ability to remarry but does not provide a specific connotation of why the women are no longer married as the modern marital status of widows and divorcées do. This is further supported by the fact that most known historical widows from the time period under investigation are never described simply with the word *vidua* - which on its own would merely represent the no longer married status of the widowed women. Instead the widowhood is described by the explicit mention of the death of the

husband, with no specific term for the woman's current state as a widow of which we would expect to be the word *vidua* if it were defined as the specific marital status of widow. The same is true of divorced women who qualify as divorcées not from a specific Latin term but from the literary description that the women have undergone the process of divorcing her husband. This reiterates the point that the specific meaning of *vidua* can only be illuminated from its context and that the term had to be clarified with content in order for it to mean specifically widows since the broader social category included all women who were no longer married.

The most significant question that a study of this kind can postulate is how does this re-definition of the term *vidua* affect other branches of ancient scholarship that use the term to answer historical and demographic questions about Roman society. Here I would like to use a passage in the *Periochae* of Book LIX as an opportunity to demonstrate how my findings about the definition of the word *vidua* can illuminate and change the interpretations of ancient historians, who have used a narrow English term widow for the word *vidua* in a context where no specific mention is made of the women's no longer married state.²¹¹ Scholarly discussion of this passage is usually limited to the field of ancient demographics due to its pertinent information about the census figures for the year 131B.C. In this context we find the word *vidua* "*censa sunt civium capita*

²¹¹ The *Periochae* of Livy's narrative are individual summaries of all the books of the *Ab Urbe Condita* that have been composed by various epitomators dating from the 2nd to 4th century A.D.

318,823, *praeter pupillos* pupillas et viduas*” (there were enumerated 318,823 citizens, not counting female and male wards and no longer married women).²¹²

Ancient historians such as Saskia Hin and Bourne in their important studies on Roman demographics translate the word *viduas* with the modern word widows.²¹³ As we have consistently seen widow is one of the many meanings of the word *vidua*, which can only be identified as such through the context of the text, otherwise the word includes other types of no longer married women such as divorcées and abandoned women, meaning all women who have been married at some point but no longer are. This modification of the meaning of the word *viduas* would expand and change the demographic speculations presented by ancient historians from only including widows to the broader category of all women who are no longer married. Hin’s demographic argument that claims that *vidua* and *pupillos* are included in the Augustan census reports is strengthened by the expansion of the definition *vidua* to include all no longer married women and not just widows because this expansion of the social category calls for a larger percentage of Roman women to be included in the *vidua* and ultimately *sui iuris* category. Therefore if *vidua* includes all no longer married women who are also *sui iuris* the claim that “it is highly improbable that one-fifths of the citizens *sui iuris* in the second century BC should be widows and wards”²¹⁴ becomes further disputed as already demonstrated by Hin’s calculations. This expansion helps account for the increase in

²¹² With <pupillos> add. Mommsen.

²¹³ See Bourne 1952 and Hin 2007, 2013.

²¹⁴ Bourne 1952, 181.

numbers that would aid Hin's already convincing demographic model.²¹⁵ This is one of the various ways in which similar case studies can aid and nuance our understanding of the ancient Roman society.

The purpose of this paper has been to provide a comprehensive analysis of all the instances of the word *vidua*, its uses and meanings in the literary sources of the last two centuries B.C. The paper, more importantly, can now be used as a tool for further research in various topics centered around the representations of women in Roman literature and historical reconstructions of the roles and statuses that different groups of women held in Roman society at this time. The tables compiled as a result of this paper provide an easy reference guide for all the instances that we have of the word *vidua*, subdivided by genre and time period that will surely expedite further work carried out on social category of no longer married women and its various subgroups. More importantly the cataloguing of the various meanings of the word *vidua* in each of its contexts will provide invaluable aid to scholars who wish to undertake a historical study of the various groups of women that are embedded in the term *vidua* or the philological approach of studying how these women are represented by various authors throughout Latin literature.

Further case studies that follow this methodology of tracing the meanings and uses of particular words through out contemporary literary source will provide indispensable tools for ancient historians, art historians and archaeologists, that can quickly survey the full extent of meanings of the word and the places in which those meanings are implemented. This paper is aimed at providing a tiny step in the process of

²¹⁵ See Hin 2007 and 2013.

bridging the various disciplines that make up this vast field just like the word *vidua* was able to bring together under it self the various types of Roman no longer married women.

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